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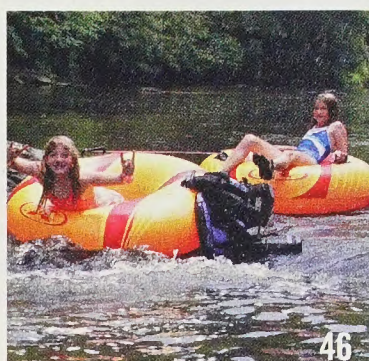


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Paddling in the estuaries around Shark Tooth Island. (Crystal Coast Tourism Authority photo)



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Your cooperative sends you Carolina Country as a convenient, economical way to share with its members information about services, director elections, meetings and management decisions. The magazine also carries legal notices that otherwise would be published in other media at greater cost.

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Carolina Country magazine is available monthly to members of North Carolina's electric cooperatives. If you are a member of one of these cooperatives but do not receive Carolina Country, you may request a subscription by calling Member Services at the office of your cooperative. If your address has changed, please inform your cooperative.

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Soy ink is naturally low in VOCs (volatile organic compounds) and its usage can reduce emissions causing air pollution.

Your cooperative's assets and the threat of cyber attacks



By David Beam

If you use a computer, you are aware of the need to protect your information from damaging viruses or intrusions by "hackers." Government and industry computer systems need security from threats ranging from theft of business secrets to espionage and sabotage of critical infrastructure. Perpetrators can be common thieves, terrorists or even foreign governments. One thing is certain: These threats are becoming more common and sophisticated.

As a member-owner, you can be assured that your cooperative has safeguards and procedures to protect the electricity delivery infrastructure from attack, including "cyber" attacks on computers and telecommunications.

In 2005, Congress passed the Energy Policy Act that contained provisions aimed at protecting the Bulk Power System, also called "the grid," by establishing industry-wide standards and practices to assure electric system reliability and security. Utilities, with oversight from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, have established a comprehensive set of standards, including cyber security standards.

North Carolina's electric cooperatives work closely with the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation (NCEMC)—the power supply organization owned by the 25 cooperatives—to ensure compliance with the standards. Cooperatives are responsible for complying with standards covering every part of the bulk electric system, including generation plants, transmission lines and substations and the sophisticated communications and computer systems which control it.

While the federal government has ultimate authority and enforcement power, it grants considerable control of these standards and practices to utilities themselves, because we have the expertise in this field. We understand the consequences of malicious acts and what's needed to prevent them. NCEMC and member distribution cooperatives follow exacting procedures to ensure compliance with all standards. A full-time compliance coordinator is solely


responsible for managing reliability and cyber security standards, and a compliance team of experts is responsible for specific aspects. We also work with specialized contractors to audit and recommend improvements.

The electric industry has deep experience with threats to critical infrastructure. For example, we've restored power after hurricanes and ice storms for decades. Now we focus increasingly on cyber threats as we employ automated systems to generate and deliver electricity.

Contrary to popular belief, a remote hacker cannot easily access the grid's telecommunications systems. Utilities employ layers of defenses and ensure that generation and transmission assets are separate from the telecommunications systems that are visible to the public.

As cooperatives adapt to a more automated "smart" grid, we pay special attention to the cyber security of telecommunications and control systems. We have developed tools that strengthen our security as we continue to improve the efficiency of our distribution systems.

Some measures we've taken are common sense: users change passwords regularly, access to our systems is restricted and logged. Other measures are more involved and costly: NCEMC operates two autonomous, secure networks, one for business systems and one for energy management. No Internet traffic is allowed on the energy management network, and remote access is monitored and controlled. We monitor networks "24-7-365," employ firewalls, and allow no command and control communication for substations. We regularly test our systems, conduct disaster recovery tests, and welcome audits.

Meantime, you can rest assured that your cooperative's critical assets are in good hands. 

David Beam is NCEMC's senior vice president for corporate strategy and its corporate compliance officer responsible for regulatory compliance.

More local food

I was excited to see the articles, "Farm Fresh" and "Farm Marketing Co-ops," in the March 2012 issue of *Carolina Country*. Amy Ney and Hannah Miller do an excellent job of advocating that we support our local farms and buy local. While they pointed out there were five marketing co-ops in North Carolina, I did want to point out Go Local NC Farms, LLC. Last year we brought over \$120,000 to the farms and local businesses participating in our co-op.

Our model is based on local farms and businesses in the Charlotte area (currently Cabarrus, Rowan, Union and Mecklenburg counties). We do not charge an annual membership fee; we do not have ordering frequency requirements, and no minimum order. We feature "cow pooling" and "pork pooling" as well as all the things you might find at a local farmers market. We simply bring it closer to people's neighborhoods. The providers make weekly offers that are published to the site, and those who register may place their order online between Friday at 9 a.m. until Thursday at midnight. The orders are gathered together and delivered to 11 pickup points in Cabarrus, Mecklenburg and Union counties. We also make a quarterly trip to Winston-Salem. To learn more, visit www.golocalncfarms.com.

Carolyn Davis, GO Local NC Farms

New avenues, new vision

That was a wonderful story about "How an experience at basketball camp opened new avenues for John Tyler Richmond." Thank you for your support of Carolina basketball and Carolina athletics in such a meaningful and altruistic way. I am thankful for the opportunity to be a part of our partnership with Touchstone Energy.

Rick Steinbacher, assistant athletic director, UNC-Chapel Hill

Virginia Bowden of Harbinger called to tell us how moved she was by Kelly Reiser's article, "How an experience at basketball camp opened new avenues for John Tyler Richmond" [March 2012]. Her grandson, who lives out of state, also read the article and has signed up to attend the Roy Williams Carolina Sports Camp this summer.

Tricycles for little girls

When I was 3, my Granddaddy promised to buy me a tricycle the next time he came to North Carolina. A few months later, Granddaddy drove all the way from Alabama to Indian Trail. He arrived late in the afternoon, and I, not understanding weariness, promptly reminded him about the promised tricycle. He assured me we would "go to Wal-Mart and get it tomorrow."

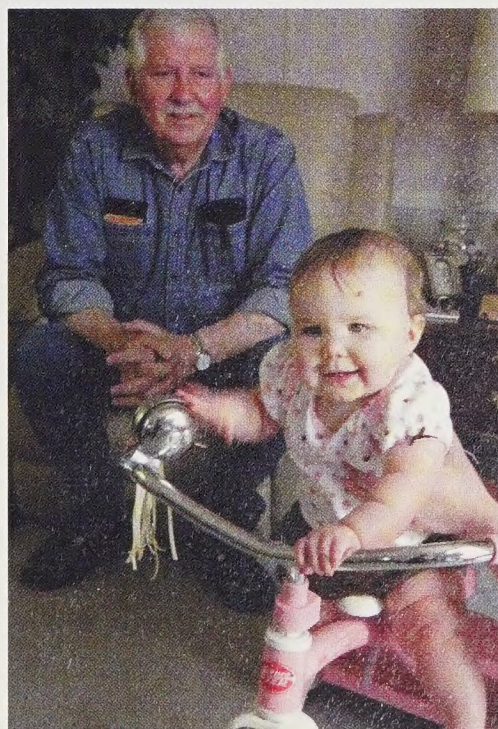
Then the grownups started arranging dinner plans. Restaurants of all varieties were discussed. Pizza? McDonalds? I interjected, "I would like a hotdog for supper." Daddy said that nowhere had hotdogs to eat. "Wal-Mart does," I sheepishly replied.

Well, that settled it. We had a fancy dinner at the Wal-Mart café. I came home with a belly full of hotdog and a tricycle from Granddaddy.

Last spring, I visited Granddaddy in Alabama with my 8-month-old daughter in tow. When we arrived, Granddaddy took little Addie upon his lap and told her about the time her mommy conned him into a tricycle. Then, he set her down and disappeared for a moment. We heard a loud "ding ding" as Granddaddy appeared pushing a very pink, very shiny, very girly Radio Flyer tricycle!

I am certain that as Addie grows up, she will hear the "tricycle tale" again and again. As she pedals about, she will also be reminded about the love granddaddies have for their grandgirls.

Chelsea Helms, Monroe, Union Power Cooperative



Crystals

I took these pictures in Glade Valley in February during a heavy fog when the temperature was about 32 degrees. These conditions caused the water to crystallize into tiny cylinder shapes in the direction the wind was blowing from.

Eugene Frampton, Glade Valley, Blue Ridge Electric

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This is my daughter, Artemisia, looking at some of our honeybees on a frame last spring.

The family that keeps bees together

About eight years ago I was going through an old photo album and came across a picture of my dad working with a beehive in the 1970s. I vaguely remember Dad working with honeybees when I was young. I was raised in the country, and he kept honeybees to pollinate our gardens and fruit trees.

After finding this photo, I asked Dad about the beehives, so we walked to the neglected bee yard. At first, all we saw were rotting, abandoned beehives, but then we noticed one hive still active. We realized the hive would likely die during the winter if we didn't do something. The box was literally falling apart. Since it was late fall, we knew it would probably kill the hive if we tried to transfer them to a new box, so we screwed plywood around the rotting box to help them survive the winter.

When spring came we were pleasantly surprised that the hive survived. That was the first hive Dad and I tended together. We now have five that we work.

Mostly I enjoy the time Dad and I spend together. Our beekeeping has prevailed and our relationship has grown through the years of me moving away to go to college, marriages, divorce, droughts and floods.

It's important for our environment, but beekeeping may not be for everyone. And I certainly don't mean to imply that it will solve all problems families may encounter. But what's more important are relationships, and that there are many ways to help strengthen them.

And now, my wonderful husband, David, is beekeeping, and he is definitely hooked. He is a great addition to our family and our bee yard.

Stephanie Woody-Groshelle, Newton

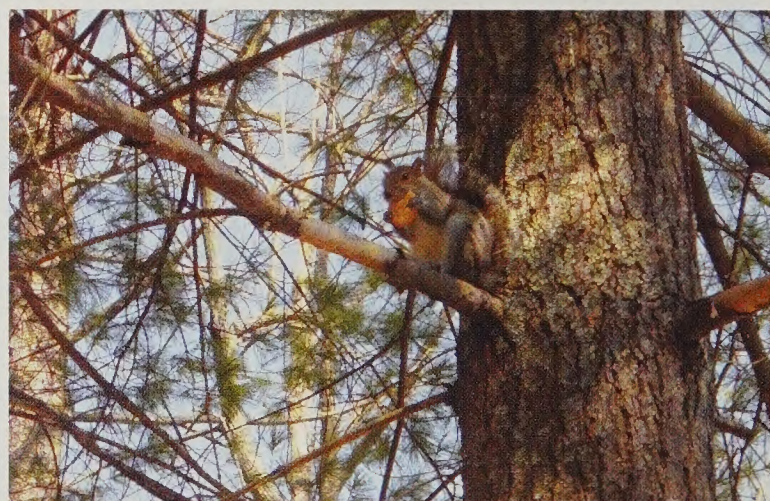
Jacob's country accent

I have always been a Surry-Yadkin EMC member and a Carolina Country reader. I want to commend you for publishing Jacob Brooks ["Jacob's Log"]. My son was fortunate enough to be on the Washington, D.C., Rural Electric Youth Tour with Jacob. We met him at the orientation meeting, and I can almost hear his voice and true country accent when I read his writing in the magazine. We live only about 10 minutes from Alleghany County, so I think of him as a neighbor. I can't wait to see what he writes. Thanks for recognizing his talent.

Ginger Shores, Thurmond, Surry-Yadkin EMC



Still active with electric cooperatives, Jacob Brooks attended the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association annual meeting in San Diego in March, assisting the Youth Leadership Council's Congressional Action Center. He is a political science major at Appalachian State University. "Jacob's Log," a quarterly column, will run next in June.



Everybody loves a Ritz

I took this picture one March on a walking trail in Westwood Park in Mount Airy.

Wayne Easter, Mount Airy



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Help your cooperative fight copper crime

Soaring metal prices have been blamed for an increase in thefts of copper and aluminum, primary components of electric distribution lines. Recent thefts of copper wire and equipment from electric utilities have been responsible for power outages, additional maintenance and expenses, diminished service reliability, and, in some cases, serious injury or death.

Copper in wire is appealing to thieves who want to sell the metal for scrap. Burglars will often climb power poles, scale fences and break into buildings to steal the precious metal. Needless to say, a copper price increase of more than 500 percent since 2001 has prompted thieves to become bolder and more inventive.

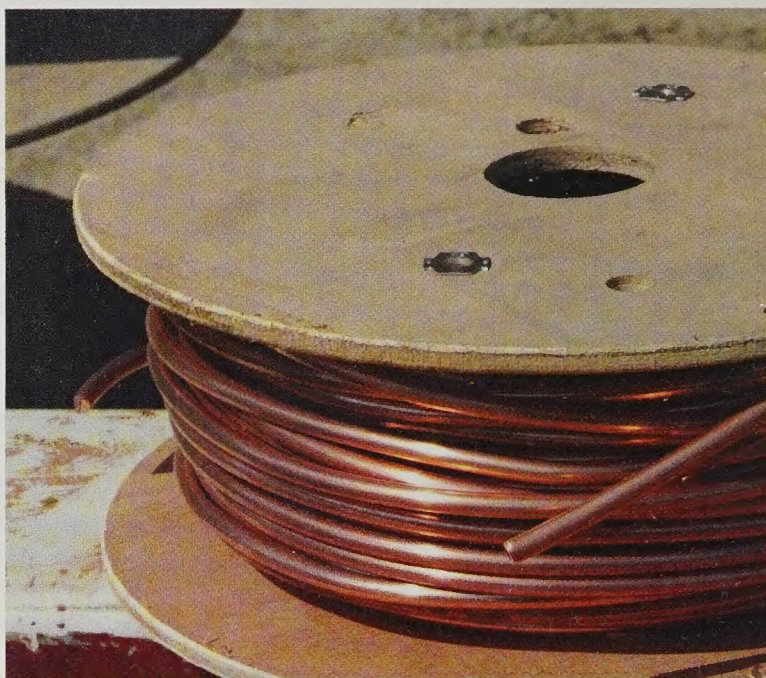
In Oklahoma, members of one electric co-op are facing an estimated \$1 million repair bill because copper thieves wrecked a substation for just \$100 worth of the metal last year. In New Mexico, a man was found dead beneath a power pole, electrocuted while trying to cut copper wiring from a live transformer. A Texas man lost his life when he cut into a live power line while trying to steal copper. Similar accidents have been reported across the country.

"To a would-be thief, stealing copper may seem like a quick way to make a buck," says Tommy Greer, director of job training and safety for the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives. "But it's illegal, it's costly, and it's not worth a life. Working with any metal and electricity is a dangerous combination, even for trained employees using proper equipment."

Thieves may not understand that they are risking their lives by taking copper from substations, where high transmission voltage is stepped down to a lower current for distribution lines. All power lines carry a potentially deadly charge.

Your electric cooperative urges you to follow these guidelines to guard against electrical dangers and prevent copper theft.

- Never enter or touch equipment inside a substation; stay away from power lines and anything touching a power line.
- If you notice anything unusual with electric facilities, such as an open substation gate, open equipment or hanging wire, contact your electric co-op immediately.
- If you see anyone around electric substations or electric facilities other than co-op personnel or contractors, call the police.
- Install motion-sensor lights on the outside of your house and business to deter thieves.
- Store tools and wire cutters in a secure location, and never leave them out while you are away.
- If you work in construction, do not leave any wires or plumbing unattended or leave loose wire at the job site, especially overnight.
- Help spread the word about the deadly consequences that can result from trying to steal copper or aluminum.



Theft of copper costs your co-op a lot of money.



State Sen. Wesley Meredith of Fayetteville visited candidate training sessions run by the state's electric cooperatives.

Hopefuls learn how to run a political campaign

Potential candidates for elected office gathered to hear from seasoned political veterans about how to run an effective campaign at a forum hosted by North Carolina's electric cooperatives and North Carolina's credit unions. The schools were held in Hickory, Fayetteville and Rocky Mount in February for people considering a run for elected office as well as potential campaign volunteers. The electric cooperatives host the non-partisan schools as a way to help candidates run better organized campaigns while getting to know and educating future leaders in the community about cooperatives and their positive impact on the community.

Well-run campaigns do a better job of getting their message out to voters which aids the public in making better decisions about who to vote for. The Candidate Training Schools aim to assist potential candidates by discussing the key components of a successful campaign such as fundraising, messaging and getting your voters to the polls.

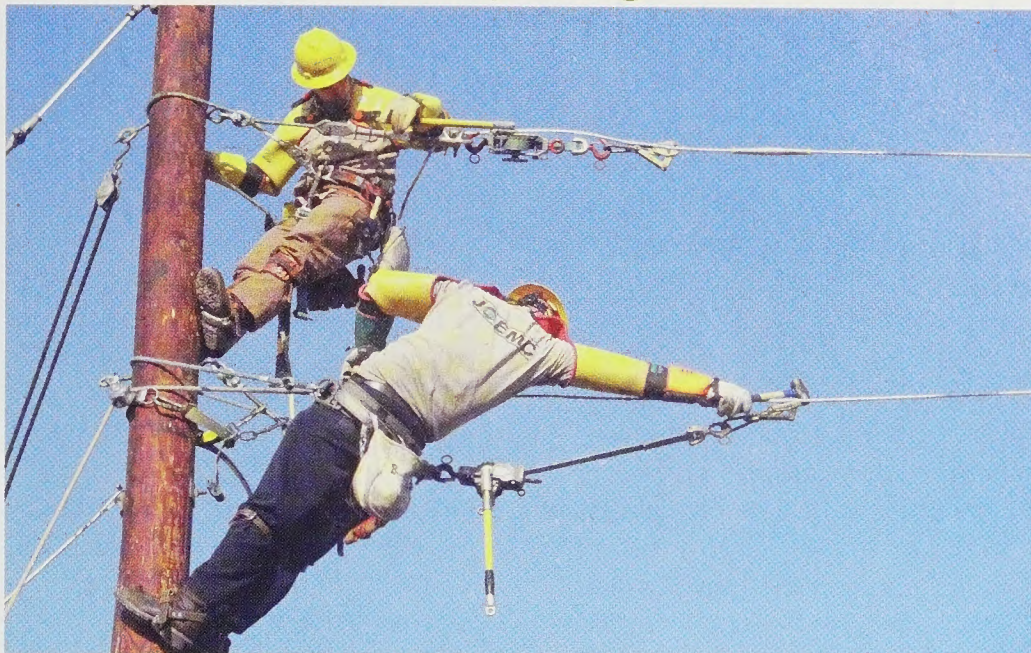
Linemen earn college certificates at Nash Community College

Eleven linemen associated with North Carolina's electric cooperatives this spring received certificates for completing course work in Electric Lineman Technology through Nash Community College. The program is offered by the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives at the campus and training field in Nash County. Courses include classroom and outdoor training in such skills as overhead line construction, underground line construction and the National Electrical Safety Code.

These linemen join 83 other co-op linemen in the state who have completed these courses.

Students who complete 65 college credits earn an Associate Degree in Electric Lineman Technology. Beyond classes in line work and energy management, courses toward the Associate Degree range from writing and math to critical thinking, computers and communication. Nine co-op linemen in recent years earned the associate degree.

For more information about the college degree program, contact the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives at (919) 875-3068.



Electric cooperative linemen take part in job training and safety courses at Nash Community College and can earn college credit at the same time.

The men who earned their Advanced Certificate in 2011 were:

Scott Dula, Blue Ridge EMC

William W. Godwin, Brunswick EMC

Jason W. Zokal, Brunswick EMC

Edward Vogel Jr., Halifax EMC

William Dockery, Lumbee River EMC

George Huggins, Lumbee River EMC

Timmy Mendoza, Lumbee River EMC

Christopher L. Jacobs, Pee Dee EMC

Corey Hayes, Roanoke EC

Chad Simmons, Roanoke EC

Corey Lawrence, Wake EMC

BRIGHT IDEAS



Got a bright idea for your classroom?

North Carolina's electric cooperatives are accepting applications for Bright Ideas education grants from creative Tar Heel teachers through September. The co-ops have set aside more than \$600,000 to fund innovative classroom projects for the 2012–2013 school year. Teachers can learn more about the program and apply online at www.ncbrightideas.com.

"The electric co-ops are proud to promote creative learning in North Carolina by giving teachers new resources to reach students and create memorable classroom experiences," said Lindsey Listrom, Bright Ideas coordinator. Last year, the cooperatives collectively funded 580 grants benefiting more than 140,000 students through the program statewide.

Grants are awarded in all subject matters and are intended for classroom-based projects that fall outside normal funding parameters. The maximum grant is \$2,000 in most cases, but can vary by the sponsoring cooperative. Teachers who apply by the early-bird deadline of Aug. 17 will be entered to win a \$500 Visa gift card.

Now in its 19th year of giving, Bright Ideas has awarded Tar Heel educators more than \$7.9 million to fund 7,700 projects benefiting 1.4 million students.

Try This!

Do-it-yourself outdoor lighting

By Jim Dulley

A fan of low-voltage residential lighting, I use it in my landscaping and gardens as well. A big advantage of low-voltage lighting is you can install it yourself and eliminate professional installation expenses. There is a huge variety of styles available at most home centers and hardware stores.

Another related advantage is safety. With low-voltage lighting, the wires on the ground carry only 12 volts. You will not be shocked if you accidentally nick one while working in the garden.

The energy efficiency of low-voltage lighting is fairly similar to standard line-voltage (120 volts) outdoor lighting. There may be slightly more electricity used because of transformer inefficiencies and higher current in the wiring, but it is not a significant difference for most systems. If you are interested in brightly lighting a large area, line-voltage lighting fixtures, such as low pressure sodium, are your most efficient choice.

The newest and most energy efficient low-voltage landscaping lighting uses super-efficient LEDs (light emitting diodes) instead of standard incandescent bulbs. This type of lighting technology is becoming

more common even for standard indoor lamps.

LEDs are still considerably more expensive than other lighting alternatives, but they use less than one-fifth as much electricity as equivalent incandescent bulbs. They also last at least 10 times longer. The light from LEDs is more directional than from incandescent bulbs, so multiple LEDs are often used inside one fixture for broader lighting patterns and brightness.

Each low-voltage LED fixture may use as little as one watt of electricity compared to about 11 watts from a typical snap-in, wedge-base, low-voltage bulb. Some of the brighter fixtures, such as bollards, use a two-watt LED, and floodlights use three LEDs. The light quality from LEDs is very white and pleasing.

The most difficult part of installing a low-voltage lighting system is making sure the total wattage of the all the fixtures on a line does not exceed the rated output of the transformer. The maximum 12-volt output wattage will be listed on the transformer, and the instructions for the fixtures should list their individual wattages.

If you buy a prepackaged low-voltage lighting kit, it will include the proper size transformer for the number and types of lights. If you add more or assemble your own lighting kit, be careful not to exceed the transformer's output maximum or ever go above 300 watts. If a lighting layout requires more than 300 watts, do not connect two transformers together. Set up two separate wiring layouts to stay below 300 watts on each.


When purchasing a low-voltage system or the components to put your own system together, select a transformer with a built-in



This contemporary low-voltage light fixture uses the most efficient LEDs for the light source.

mechanical or electronic timer or photo-eye control. These are common in many kits. With a timer, there is no chance of leaving the lights on all night and wasting electricity.

The most convenient are photo-eye controlled transformers. With a standard mechanical timer, if the electric power goes off temporarily, the timer motor also stops so the on/off sequence will be incorrect and need to be reset. A photo-eye control has many sequencing options. One of the more convenient and efficient is "on" at dusk, "off" in a set number of hours (six, eight, etc.).

To edge a path, snap-together lighted plastic simulated bricks are effective. The electrical connectors are built into the bricks so you have to run wiring to only the first brick along the edge. To light a deck, several decking material manufacturers offer built-in post and baluster lights with hidden wiring. 

James Dulley is an engineer and syndicated columnist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Send inquiries to James Dulley, Carolina Country, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit www.dulley.com.

The following companies offer low-voltage lights:

Argee Corp. (800) 449-3030
www.argeecorp.com

Idaho Wood (800) 635-1100
www.idahowood.com

Kichler Lighting (866) 558-5706
kichlerlighting.com

Nightscape (800) 544-4840
www.nightscape.com

Troy Landscape Lighting (800) 677-6811
www.troylandscapelighting.com

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A new heat pump water heater is a proven energy-saver

By Lisa Taylor-Galizia

Joy Williams and family have cut their electric bill in half since they moved from a drafty apartment into a 1,200-square-foot Energy Star home, with a piece of their energy savings attributed to their highly efficient heat pump water heater.

Their house, built by Crystal Coast Habitat for Humanity in October 2010, is equipped with a General Electric Hybrid Water Heater that Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative donated. CCEC marketing specialist Richard Tuttle routinely reads the separate meter installed on the unit when it was put in place.

"We didn't know how well it would do going into the project," he said. "We were looking to validate the manufacturer's performance information. We have actually seen it outperform the manufacturer's estimated energy efficiency."

The unit, which is in a hallway closet, makes a low humming noise when it's running, but with the louvered doors closed, the sound is barely noticeable. The thermostat is set at 120 degrees, and the unit is set to "hybrid" mode.

"It's wonderful," said Mrs. Williams, who only has to remember to keep the filter clean. And since the unit is next to the washer and dryer, remembering to do that is easy.

Not only has the energy-efficient home helped cut expenses, Mrs. Williams said, she and her three children have become much more energy-conscious, turning out lights and electronics when they leave a room and limiting time in the shower. Light fixtures are all fitted with CFLs, and the house has a sealed crawlspace.

Cutting in half an electric bill that once ran about \$200 a month puts a lot of extra money back into a household that is used to operating on a tight budget.

While the tank section of the unit is not much different than a traditional water heater, what's different about the hybrid unit is that it has a compressor and evaporator integrated into the



Richard Tuttle (right) of Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative, along with co-op member Joy Williams, looks over her heat pump water heater. Notice the compressor/evaporator unit atop the water tank.


top of the unit to draw ambient heat in from the surrounding space using two variable speed fans. Coils wrap the internal tank all the way to the bottom and transfer this heat into the tank, heating the water.

The water heater has five distinct operating modes, but except for a brief period during CCEC's testing phase, the unit at the Williams' home is best suited for hybrid mode because of the number of people in the household.

Another feature Mrs. Williams likes is the ability to shut off the unit with the push of the "vacation mode" button if the family is going to be away from home for a time.

Additionally, it has an error code display that will let the homeowner know if the unit fails for any reason. "All the homeowner has to do is call a 1-800 number for help," Tuttle said.

While a heat pump water heater is more costly to purchase than traditional units, tax credits and other incentives, such as CCEC's rebate program, can make the investment worthwhile.

For more information about heat pump water heaters, visit www.energysavers.gov. To look at units, visit a home improvement or plumbing supply store. You can also ask a plumber who has experience installing them. 

Water heater settings

"E-heat": In this mode, the water heater will only operate the heat pump to recover the water temperature. This is the most efficient mode, as the traditional electric heating elements are never used.

Hybrid: In hybrid setting, the unit will use the heat pump first and foremost as its main way to heat the water. If and when a faster recovery time of the water temperature is needed, the internal elements will alternate to provide a quick temperature recovery. When the system determines its demand need has been met, it will automatically revert back to using the heat pump.

High Demand: This is a great feature to use if you have additional people staying at your house for a weekend. This mode operates very similar to hybrid mode; however you are letting the system know in advance that it will be experiencing a larger water demand than usual. The water heater will be faster to react to temperature recovery by cycling on the heating elements sooner and longer.

Standard: In this mode, the heat pump will be shut off and the system will work exactly like a standard water heater, using only the electric elements to heat water.

Lisa Taylor-Galizia is communications director for Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative, based in Newport.

WHERE IN
CAROLINA COUNTRY
IS THIS?

This is a Carolina Country scene in Touchstone Energy territory. If you know where it is, send your answer by April 9 with your name, address and the name of your electric cooperative.

By e-mail: where@carolinacountry.com

Or by mail: Where in Carolina Country?
P.O. Box 27306
Raleigh, NC 27611

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our May issue, will receive \$25.



March winner

The March photo by Karen House shows an old gas station owned by Ron Little. It's on NC Hwy. 45 between Midway and Merry Hill in Bertie County. The winning answer, chosen at random from all the correct entries, was from Rose White of Merry Hill, a member of Roanoke Electric Cooperative.

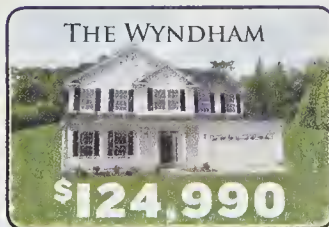
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This picture is of my mother and me on our first Mother's Day in 1966. Can you see my red rose?

Roses for parents

Last spring I found myself planting roses in a new flower bed in our front yard, and I remembered back in my childhood all the rosebushes that my grandmothers and mother enjoyed.

Every year on Mother's Day or Father's Day my mother would cut each of us a rose to wear to church. The tradition was that you wore a red or pink rose for your mother or father, depending on the day of honor. You wore a white rose in memory of your mother or father if one had passed away.

I had not thought of this tradition in years. Maybe now that I have my own rose bushes, I'll start that tradition with my family.

Wanda Garren, Lincolnton, Rutherford EMC

Our mother's sacrifices

I will always remember Easter morning in my childhood home. Running downstairs from our bedrooms, my sisters and I discovered our Easter baskets on the kitchen table. In yellow, pink or purple paper, the multicolor baskets contained a bunny, a candy cross, jellybeans and foil-covered eggs nestled in green grass. We had given up chocolate for Lent, so we waited until after church to open them. Later, we spent the day eating only candy. Our mother, Doris, always gave us Easter outfits along with the baskets. Mom bought all five of us a new dress, coat, hat, shoes and a pocketbook.

My mother raised five girls alone, and I will never know how she gave us this perfect day. Our family was poor, and the price of clothing, accessories, baskets and candy was high. Lately, I think about what my mother must have sacrificed to give us those beautiful and delicious Easter gifts. She never once complained.

Today when I think about what to give up for Lent, I remember those precious Easter memories, my mother, and what she did for us. Now, besides sacrificing something for Lent, I also give my time, talent and support to others in order to honor and remember my mother.

Christine (Stoyko) Daniels, Manns Harbor, Tideland EMC



Our mother always gave us Easter out

No April fools

My sister, my best friend and I started out on an adventure the morning of April 18, 2001. Actually, we were just going to Smithfield for a day of shopping. It was relatively sunny when we started out on our road trip. We shopped around a while, ate and had a good time.

It started to cloud up so we decided to head home. It began raining pretty hard. We pulled up to the house and ran inside. We were sitting around with the door open when we noticed that it was not just raining, it had started to hail. Then much to our amazement it started "raining" frogs. Yes, frogs. Little baby frogs hopping around everywhere! I was so glad to have other witnesses that day. Then snow began to fall!

We just stood in the doorway in awe. We felt like little kids witnessing something unbelievable: rain, hail, frogs and snow falling from the sky, all on one April day.

Angie Brooks, Dunn, South River EMC

SEND US YOUR *Memories*

We'll pay \$50 for those we publish in the magazine. We can put even more on our Internet sites, but can't pay for them. (If you don't want them on the Internet, let us know.)

Guidelines:

1. Approximately 200 words.
2. Digital photos must be at least 600kb or 1200 by 800 pixels.
3. No deadline, but only one entry per household per month.
4. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want yours returned.
5. We pay \$50 for each one published in the magazine. We retain reprint rights.
6. Include your name, mailing address and the name of your electric cooperative.
7. E-mail: iremember@carolinacountry.com
Or by U.S. mail: I Remember, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616



Elsie Pugh and her school bus in 1952.

Days with Dad

My dad managed grain elevators, and I'd often spend the day there, especially during harvest. Back then, those shiny steel augers in the dump pit looked huge, and the rollers over the pit seemed awfully far apart. But the positives far outweighed the negatives. I made friends with some of the kids who rode the grain trucks with their fathers.

We used to spend a whole day with one family at least once a week. Their daughter was only a few years older than I was. I was an only child, so she became my unofficial big sister and best friend. We'd play in the hayloft, or she'd take me for rides on a Ford 8N tractor.

I also remember the roaring, bluish-orange rings of fire from the grain dryers, the smell of hot corn and the chattering sound the kernels made moving through the screens. Then there was the brief flash of a smile on a farmer's dirty, tired face when he got paid.

So when you sit down at the kitchen tables to eat, ask God's blessing on our farmers and their families. And keep giving kids rides on your tractors. It might inspire them to be a farmer someday.

*Craig Finley, Sophia,
Randolph EMC*

Silver dollar driver

Can you imagine that 60 years ago North Carolina let 16-year-old students drive school buses? I was 15, and a route was going to be mine when I turned 16. So the day I turned 16, I went to Manteo and got my driver's license.

I was raised in Gull Rock, and all the roads around there were dirt except Hwy. 264. So the bus got stuck a lot. In the mornings, the kids liked it, but in the afternoons they were unhappy. They just wanted to get home so they could go hunting or play outside.

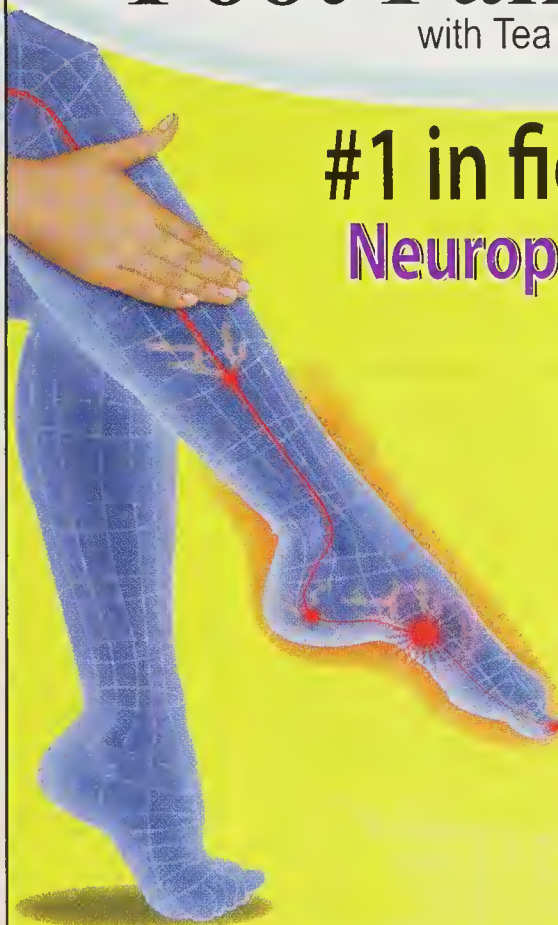
I received the Safe Driving Award for the two years that I drove. My award was a silver dollar. I still have them.

In my older years, I worked for Tideland EMC in the Engelhard and Pantego offices. I loved every minute there and made some great friends.

Elsie Pugh Moore Selby, Engelhard, Tideland EMC

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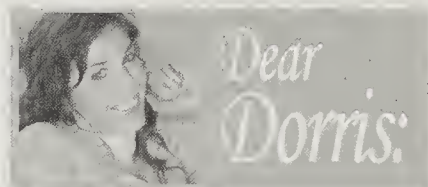
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Loose Saggy Neck Skin – Can Any Cream Cure Turkey Neck?



DEAR DORRIS: I'm a woman who is 64 years young who suffers from really

loose skin under my chin and on my lower neck. I hate the term, but my grandkids say I have "turkey neck" and frankly, I've had enough of it!

I have tried some creams designed to help tighten and firm that loose, saggy skin, but they did not work. Is there any cream out there that can truly help my loose neck skin?

Turkey Neck, Greensboro, NC

DEAR TURKEY-NECK: In fact, there is a very potent cream on the market that firms, tightens and regenerates new skin cells on the neck area. It is called the **Dermagist Neck Restoration Cream®**. This cream contains an instant lift ingredient that tightens the skin naturally, as

well as deep moisturizing ingredients to firm the skin and make it more supple. Amazingly, the **Dermagist Neck Restoration Cream®** also has Stem Cells taken from *Malus Domestica*, a special apple from Switzerland.

These stem cells are actually unprogrammed cells that can mimic those of young skin that stays tight, firm and wrinkle free. As an alternative to the scary surgeries or face lifts that many people resort to, this cream really packs a big punch on the loose saggy skin of the neck.

The **Dermagist Neck Restoration Cream®** is available online at **Dermagist.com** or you can order or learn more by calling toll-free, **888-771-5355**. Oh, I almost forgot... I was given a promo code when I placed my order that gave me **10% off**. The code was "NCN3". It's worth a try to see if it still works.

April Events



Local artists featured at "Visions Revealed" at Hillsborough Gallery include Arianna Bara, Ali Givens, Pat Lloyd and Kim Wheaton. The exhibit runs Apr. 23–May 20 in Hillsborough. (919) 732-5001 or www.hillsboroughgallery.com

Mountains

Early Bird Arrivals

Guided bird walk
Apr. 1, Chimney Rock State Park
(828) 287-6113
www.chimneyrockpark.com

Downtown Cruise-In

Apr. 7, Lenoir
(828) 728-3811
www.lenoircruisers.com

Easter Sunrise Service

Apr. 8, Chimney Rock State Park
(828) 287-6113
www.chimneyrockpark.com

Quartetto Gelato

Virtuosic showpieces
Apr. 10, Spindale
(828) 287-6113
www.foundationsshows.org

Music Festival

Darin & Brooke Aldridge
Apr. 13–14, Cherryville
(704) 517-9896
www.catawbavalleymusicrevival.com

225 Years: Birthday Party

Courthouse lawn, cake, speeches
Apr. 14, Rutherfordton
(828) 287-6113
www.rutherfordtown.com

ALFA Hike for Hope 5k

Apr. 14, Morganton
(828) 308-2722
www.racingtoes.com/pages/ALFA-Hike-for-Hope-5k.html

Alien Invaders Workshop

Identifying native & non-native plants
Apr. 14, Chimney Rock State Park
(828) 287-6113
www.chimneyrockpark.com

Former "American Idol" Stars

Celebrate Motown
Apr. 14, Spindale
(828) 287-6113
www.foundationsshows.org

The House At Pooh Corner

Production based on Milne classic
Apr. 16, Spindale
(828) 287-6113
www.foundationsshows.org

From the Mixed-Up Files

of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler
Musical drama
Apr. 18, Spindale
(828) 287-6113
www.foundationsshows.org

Honky Tonk Angels Concert

Apr. 19, West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787
www.ashecountyarts.org

Hickory Hops

Beer Festival
Apr. 21, Hickory
(828) 322-1121
<http://hickoryhops.com>

Spring Fest

Apr. 21, West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787
www.ashecountyarts.org

Greening Up The Mountains Festival

Apr. 28, Sylva
(828) 586-1577
www.downtownsylvva.org

ONGOING

Street Dance

Monday nights, Hendersonville
(828) 693-9708
www.historichendersonville.org

Bluegrass Music Jam

Thursdays, Marion
(828) 652-2215

Alleghany Jubilee

Tuesday & Saturday nights
Through Dec. 28, 2013
Sparta
(336) 372-4591
<http://alleghanyjubilee.com>

My Favorite Things

Songs of Rodgers & Hammerstein
Through Apr. 22, Flat Rock
(828) 693-0731
www.flatrockplayhouse.org

Piedmont

Spring Break Farm Camp

Apr. 2–6, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Damn Yankees

Musical comedy about baseball
Apr. 5, Hamlet
(910) 410-1691
www.richmondcc.edu

Easter Egg Hunt

Apr. 5, Asheboro
(336) 626-1201
www.asheboronc.gov

Antique Tractor Show

& Spring Festival
Apr. 6–7, Albemarle
(910) 528-2293

Old Time Fiddler's Convention

Apr. 6–7, Harmony
(704) 267-9439
www.vanhoyfarms.com

Easter Eggstravaganza

Apr. 7, Asheboro
(336) 626-1201
www.asheboronc.gov

Stoneybrook Steeplechase

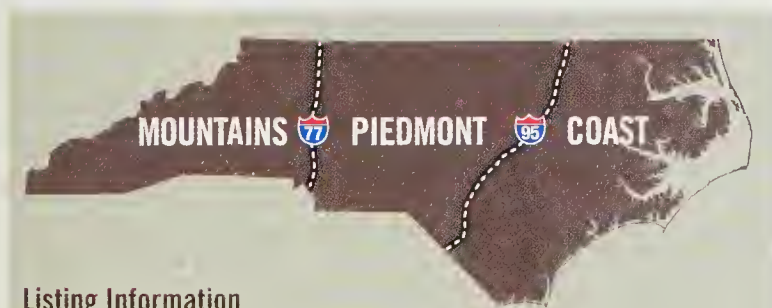
Apr. 7, Raeford
(910) 875-2074
www.carolinahorsepark.com

Easter Egg Hunt

Apr. 7, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Old Time Dance

Slate Mountain Ramblers
Apr. 7, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.surryarts.org



Listing Information

Deadlines:

For June: April 25
For July: May 25

Submit Listings Online:

Visit www.carolinacountry.com and click "See NC" to add your event to the magazine and/or our website. Or e-mail events@carolinacountry.com.

SpringFest/Easter Egg Hunt

Apr. 7, Gold Hill
(704) 267-9439
www.historicgoldhill.com

Arboretum Plant Sale

Apr. 9–14, Clemmons
(336) 703-2852
www.tanglewoodgardens.org

Home & Garden Tour

Apr. 11, Southern Pines
(910) 695-7881
www.southernpinesgardenclub.com

Fireman's Day

Family festivities
Apr. 14, Youngsville
(919) 556-6899
www.yvfd.com

Kite Day

Apr. 14, Winston-Salem
(336) 924-8191
www.bethabarapark.org

Herb & Plant Festival

Apr. 14, Concord
(704) 920-3310
<http://cabarrus.ces.ncsu.edu>

Fun Girls

Lecture series on Andy Griffith Show
Apr. 14, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.surryarts.org

Art Walk

Apr. 14, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.surryarts.org

Robot Rumble

Bot hockey, demos, workshops
Apr. 14, Durham
(919) 220-5429
www.lifeandscience.org

Farm Show & Festival

Apr. 14–15, Monroe
(704) 289-4747
www.unioncountyantiquetractors.com

Glenn Davis Memorial Concert

Apr. 17, Asheboro
(336) 626-1201
www.asheboronc.gov

Spring Homeschool Day

Apr. 18, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Stand By Your Man

Musical about Tammy Wynette
Apr. 19, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.surryarts.org

Yadkin Valley Bluegrass Convention

Apr. 20–21, Yadkinville
(336) 409-4775
www.yadkingrass.com

Broadway Our Way Festival

Apr. 21, Broadway
(919) 258-3163
www.broadwaync.com

Clenny Creek Day

Live music, children's activities
Apr. 21, Carthage
(910) 639-7959
www.moorehistory.com

Peddlers Flea Market

Apr. 21, Carthage
(910) 947-2905
www.thepeddlersfleamarket

Discover Latta Plantation

Apr. 21, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Voice of the Blue Ridge

Apr. 21, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.surryarts.org

Clifford The Big Red Dog—Live!

Family musical
Apr. 21, Hamlet
(910) 410-1690
www.richmondcc.edu

Golf Tournament

Apr. 23, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Nanonights, Macropints

Explore the world at the nanoscale
Apr. 26, Durham
(919) 220-5429
www.lifeandscience.org

Band of Dz

Apr. 26, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.surryarts.org

Such Sweet Thunder

Literature, acting, music
Apr. 26, Durham
(336) 841-2273
www.festivalstage.org



Jimmy McDonald Photography - jmacphoto.com

At a press conference announcing the return of NASCAR to Rockingham Speedway, two NASCAR Camping World Truck Series show trucks offered a sneak peek of what racing fans will experience in April when the truck series returns to The Rock.

Rockingham Speedway welcomes NASCAR back home

What goes around really does come around. After an eight-year absence, NASCAR-sanctioned racing is back at Rockingham Speedway in Richmond County. The NASCAR Camping World Truck Series presents the Good Sam Roadside Assistance 200, presented by Cheerwine at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Apr. 15, for an inaugural clash on the high-banked, one-mile oval in the Sandhills. For ticket information, call (910) 205-8800 or visit www.rockingham Speedway.com.

The Embers In Concert

Apr. 27, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.surryarts.org

Triad Highland Games

Apr. 27–28, Greensboro
(336) 288-6887
www.triadhIGHLANDgames.org

BBQ Capital Cook-off

Apr. 27–28, Lexington
(336) 249-0383
www.uptownlexington.com

Country Magic Concert

Apr. 28, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.surryarts.org

Spring Market Place

Apr. 28, Lexington
(336) 956-9901

Civil War Soldier For A Day

Apr. 28, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Health Expo & Healthy Kids Day

Yadkin Family YMCA
Apr. 28, Yadkinville
(336) 760-9983

Preservation Homes Tour

Apr. 28–29, Warrenton
(252) 257-3578
www.preservationwarrenton.com

Quilt Show

Apr. 29, Cedar Grove
(919) 732-4841

War for Empire

Battle reenactments, encampments
Through Apr. 1, Statesville
(704) 873-5882
www.fortdobbs.org

ONGOING**Maness Pottery & Music Barn**

Dinner, music, fellowship
Tuesday nights, Midway
(910) 948-4897
www.liveatclydes.com

Durham Civil War Roundtable

Third Thursday, Durham
(919) 643-0466

Art Walk

First Friday, Greenville
(252) 329-4200
www.uptowngreenville.com

Art After Hours

Second Friday, Wake Forest
(919) 570-0765
www.sunflowerstudiowf.com

Betty Lynn (Thelma Lou)

Appearance at Andy Griffith Museum
Third Friday, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.visitmayberry.com

Arts Councils' Fourth Friday

Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.theartscouncil.org

Farmers Market

1st & 3rd Saturdays, Wake Forest
(919) 671-9269
www.wakeforestmarket.org

Woman's Club Antiques Show & Sale

Through Apr. 1, Wake Forest
(919) 562-7770
www.wake-forest-womans-club.com

Clybourne Park

Comedy-drama
Apr. 6–28, Charlotte
(704) 458-4105
www.atcharlotte.org

Mummies of The World

Through Apr. 8, Charlotte
(704) 372-6261
www.discoveryplace.org

Guest Artist Gail O'Neil

Through Apr. 12, Wake Forest
(919) 870-0822
www.sunflowerstudiowf.com

Vineyard Photography Invitational

Apr. 13–22, Salisbury
(336) 770-1137
www.caublecreekvineyard.com

The Crucible

Drama about Salem witch trials
Apr. 13–29, Raleigh
(919) 821-4579
www.raleighlittletheatre.org

Guest Artist Lauren Petrosky

Apr. 13–May 10, Wake Forest
(919) 570-0765
www.sunflowerstudiowf.com

Visions Revealed

Apr. 23–May 20, Hillsborough
(919) 732-5001
www.hillsboroughgallery.com

Music Barn Concerts

Saturdays through June 30, Mt. Gilead
(910) 220-6426
www.mgmusicbarn.com

Celebrating 100 Years

of Girl Scouting
Through July, Raleigh
(919) 807-7900
www.ncmuseumofhistory.org

Coast**Business Expo**

Apr. 5, Greenville
(252) 329-4200
www.greenville.org

The Taming of The Shrew

Apr. 5, Rocky Mount
(252) 985-5197
www.dunncenter.com

Uptown First Friday Artwalk

Apr. 6, Greenville
(252) 329-4200
www.uptowngreenville.org

Unforgettable Evening With Natalie Cole

Apr. 10, Greenville
(252) 329-4200
www.ecu.edu/srapas

Great Pirate Purple/Gold Pigskin Pig-Out

Apr. 11–15, Greenville
(252) 329-4200
www.ecu.edu

Easels In The Gardens

Apr. 13–14, Edenton
(252) 339-1321
www.cupolahouse.org

PirateFest

International and local crafts
Apr. 13–14, Greenville
(252) 329-4200
www.piratefestnc.com

Historic Homes & Gardens Tour

Apr. 13–14, New Bern
(252) 638-8558
www.newbernhistorical.org

Meherrin River Trail Ride

Apr. 13–15, Severn
(252) 398-7407
www.meherrinrivertrails.com

In-Water Boat Show

Apr. 13–15, Oriental
(252) 249-0228
www.orientalboatshow.com

Pig In The Park

Apr. 14, Goldsboro
(919) 735-2358
www.piginthepark.com

Crafty Saturday

Apr. 14, Tarboro
(252) 641-0857
www.cardscraps.com

Special Olympics Track & Field

Apr. 18, Greenville
(252) 329-4200
www.grpd.info

Billy Taylor Jazz Concert

Apr. 20, Greenville
(252) 329-4200
www.ecuarts.com

Plant Swap

Apr. 21, Havelock
(252) 447-8327

Wine & Music Festival

Duplin Winery
Apr. 21, Rose Hill
(919) 671-2536
www.ourmainssqueeze.com

Rose Festival

Apr. 21, Pink Hill
(252) 568-2425

LeTour de Bogue Banks

Apr. 21, Pine Knoll Shores
(252) 808-2998
www.2012bicyclerde.kintera.org/pks

Homes Tour & Art Show

Apr. 21, Emerald Isle
(252) 393-6500
www.libraryhomestour.com

Maternity Fair

Apr. 22, Greenville
(252) 329-4200
www.pittcountync.gov

Flags Over Hatteras Symposium

Apr. 26–28, Hatteras
(252) 986-2995
www.graveyardoftheatlantic.com

Dogwood Festival

Apr. 27–29, Farmville
(252) 329-4200
www.farmville-nc.com

Albemarle Chorale Spring Concert

Apr. 29, Edenton
(252) 426-5891

Comedian Kevin Hart

Apr. 29, Greenville
(252) 329-4200

ONGOING**Art Walk**

First Friday, Elizabeth City
(252) 335-5330
<http://ecncart.com>

Art Walk

First Friday, Greenville
(252) 329-4200
www.uptowngreenville.com

Ghost Tours

Apr. 4–8, New Bern
(252) 571-4766

Shad Festival

Apr. 16–22, Grifton
(252) 329-4200
www.griftonnc.com

NC Art Pottery

Through May 1, Elizabeth City
(252) 331-4037
www.museumofthealbemarle.com

Civil War Exhibits

Through July 31, Hatteras
(252) 986-2995
www.graveyardoftheatlantic.com



Okra: edible and ornamental

Growing okra is a Carolina tradition, but why confine it to the veggie patch? Okra is a rather handsome plant in foliage and especially flower, as a member of the highly-ornamental Hibiscus family. Just the sight of its beautiful blooms should be a clue to the decorative possibilities of this vegetable in the landscape.

Some okra selections even have additional ornamental attributes. The short stature and tropical-looking leaves of 'Lee' (order seeds online from Park Seeds: www.parkseed.com) and 'Cajun Jewel' (Southern Exposure Seed Exchange: www.southernexposure.com) make them candidates for being snuck creatively into perennial beds or flower borders.

And if you want to see red—in a good way, of course—grow an okra variety such as 'Burgundy' (Southern Exposure Seed Exchange), a flashy floozy with red stems and leaves streaked in crimson, matching the dark red of the flavorful pods. 'Red Velvet' (Burpee: www.burpee.com) closely compares to 'Burgundy'. Compact in size but just as pretty—and productive—is 'Little Lucy' (Reimer: www.reimerseeds.com), a 2-foot okra sporting scarlet pods that are as pleasing to the eyes as they are to the taste buds.

Mixing okra with landscape plants does come with one caution—make sure that any pesticides sprayed on the plants are cleared for use on the edible pods.

Garden to do's

April

- ▶ Go wild. Introduce your garden to such pretty native wildflowers as turtlehead, ironweed, cardinal flower, climbing aster, coral honeysuckle, black-eyed Susan or Joe-pye weed.
- ▶ As long as the foliage of spring-blooming bulbs is green, leave it alone to allow the plants to absorb more energy for next year's flower show. When it begins to turn brown, you can unleash the weed eater or lawn mower.
- ▶ Don't over-apply nitrogen to plants such as blackberry, cotoneaster, pear, apple, quince, raspberry and pyracantha, as new growth that develops too quickly will be susceptible to fire blight.
- ▶ Cool-season vegetables that were seeded in the garden last month should now be thinned to their proper spacing requirements.
- ▶ Begin planting summer vegetables such as corn, cucumbers cantaloupes, tomatoes, pumpkins, snap beans, squash and watermelons after the threat of frost has passed.
- ▶ Remember to set aside an area for the little gardeners in your family. Show them how to prepare the soil and then help them grow such easy plants as sunflowers, zinnias, pole beans and pumpkins.

May

- ▶ Two secrets for a full-flowering clematis: (1) Make sure it gets at least five to six hours of sun a day; and (2) keep the roots cool with a 3- to 4-inch thick covering of organic mulch.
- ▶ It has finally warmed up enough to plant such summer beauties as gladiolus, dahlias, caladiums and cannas.
- ▶ Now is a good time to think of everlasting—well, at least everlasting flowers. The blooms of celosia, gomphrena, Chinese lantern, statice and strawflower are easily dried and hold up nicely in indoor arrangements.
- ▶ Want to cover a fence or trellis? Plant quick-growing annual climbers such as moonvine, cypress vine, morning glory, firecracker vine or purple hyacinth bean.
- ▶ By the middle to the end of this month, begin planting heat-loving okra, eggplant, lima beans and peppers.
- ▶ For the biggest watermelons, mulch heavily with compost, water often and thin each vine to three or four melons. 🍉

L.A. Jackson is the former editor of Carolina Gardener Magazine. Contact him at: lajackson1@gmail.com.

Tip of the Month

Like to plant seeds in the garden but don't enjoy the backaches that result from this spring ritual? If bending over is becoming a literal pain, from a hardware store, buy a 4-foot piece of PVC or galvanized metal pipe that is about 1 inch in diameter. While standing up, use the pipe to poke holes into well-prepared soil and then roll a seed down the pipe into each hole.

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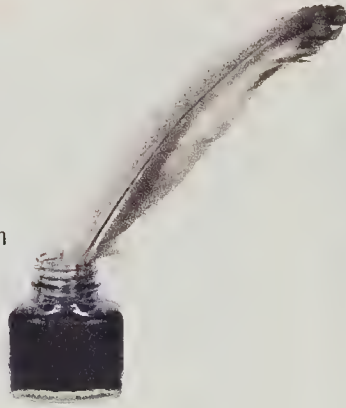
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he chewed up his mattress,
and awoke feeling _____.



Write your own last line. Then turn to page 25 for mine.
-cgj

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-Kipling

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(Thanks to reader Ron Hachet of Hendersonville for this
travel tip. -cgj)



Oh, Kay!

Look at it this way.
If you were a dog,
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about ten years old.



3 9 6 2 8
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x 2
R

A

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For answers, please see page 25

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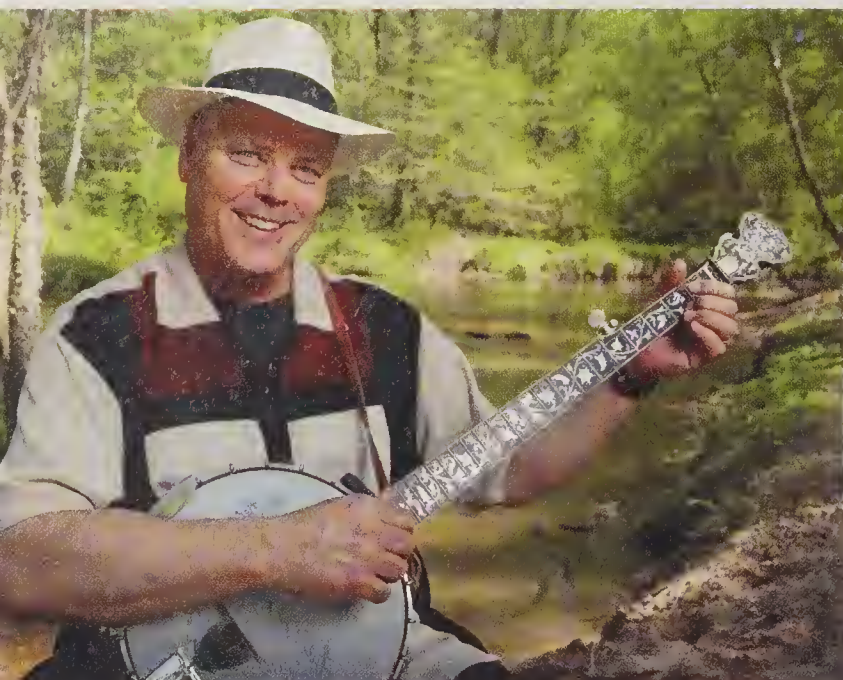
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Getting To Know...

David Holt

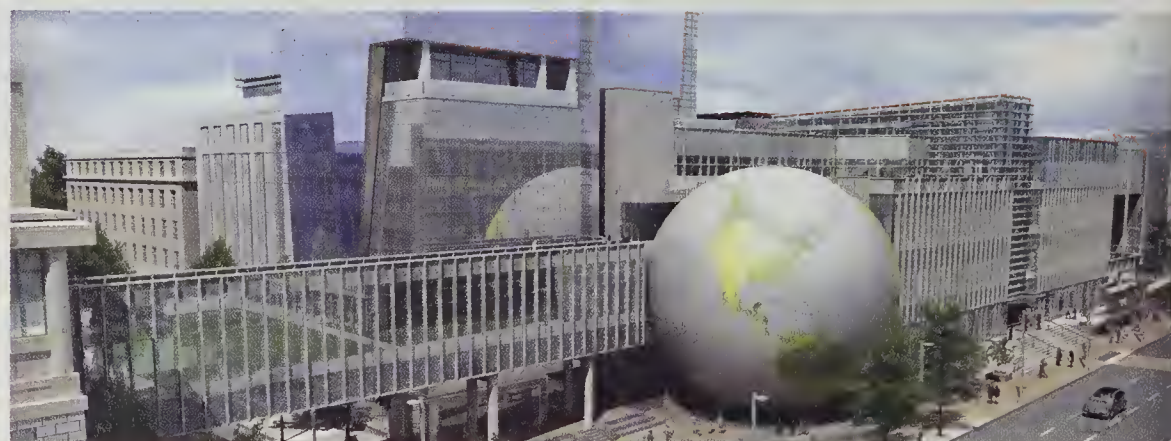
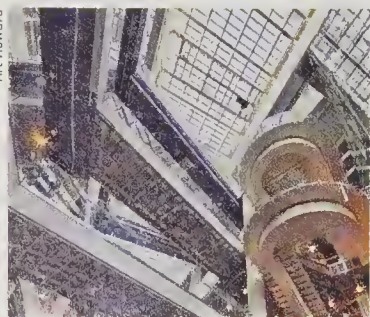
Known for: Award-winning musician, storyteller, historian, television host and entertainer

About: David Holt graduated from the University of California at Santa Barbara with degrees in biology and art. But he always loved music and moved to the western North Carolina mountains for its old-time tunes and folk culture. Holt also has a degree in education and founded the Appalachian Music Program at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa in 1975. Since 1981, he has pursued a full-time career

in entertainment, telling and singing stories and ballads while spiritedly playing the banjo, slide guitar, harmonica, bones and spoons. He even teaches audiences how to play a paper bag. The four-time Grammy winner has numerous recordings of funny, southern folktales and traditional music. He hosts the TV show "Folkways" on UNV-TV and has performed in South America, Thailand and Africa as a musical ambassador for the U.S. State Department.

Now: Holt continues to tour, whether solo or with other performers. Married for more than 35 years, he and his wife, Ginny, live near Asheville. In June, he will be inducted in the Blue Ridge Music Hall of Fame.

New, high-tech science center



A new 80,000-square-foot wing of the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh will take visitor participation to a whole new level when it opens in a 24-hour grand ceremony from 5 p.m. Friday to 5 p.m. Saturday, April 20–21. Visitors at the new Nature Research Center can immerse themselves in high-tech interactive exhibits, observe and talk with working scientists and researchers, perform their own experiments and learn about cutting-edge research on health, DNA, forestry, sustainability, nanotechnology and space exploration. (919) 733-7450 or www.naturalsciences.org



Herpetology Celebration

If you go to the upcoming Herpetology Celebration in Burlington you will be able to engage in hands-on experiences with reptiles and amphibians, go on a nature walk to spot them, create art and jewelry that reflect a love of herps, and enjoy a Native American storyteller's account of how culture and science interact. Other activities include tracking turtles with Boykin spaniels trained to sniff them out. Admission is free to the community event, held 10 a.m.

to 2 p.m. at Cedarrock Park, a historical farm and rural park located about six miles south of I-85 and I-40. The celebration is part of Herpetology Education in Rural Places and Spaces (HERPS), aimed at educating the public about local reptiles and amphibians and assisting students in developing an interest in science. For more about this celebration, call (336) 278-5854 or email Dr. Terry Tomasek at ttomasek@elon.edu. For information about another HERPS celebration tentatively planned at press time for September 12 in Pembroke, email Dr. Andrew Ash at andy.ash@uncp.edu or call (910) 521-6418. For more about HERPS in general, visit www.uncg.edu/bio/TheHERPProject.



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Using water: How low can you flow?

Q I hear that most of North Carolina is in a drought. I'm worried that if I keep using water like I always have, I'll have to drill a deeper well. I try to take short showers and have replaced leaky toilet flappers. What are other cost-effective ways for me to cut down on my water use?

You bring up an excellent question at an important time. Droughts cause groundwater levels to drop and lessen the quantity of water in our lakes and streams. We depend on groundwater for crop irrigation, manufacturing and electricity generation.

The easiest way to cut down on water use is to know where you use the most water. For households that water their lawn or garden, irrigation tends to be the highest water user. If you don't irrigate, looking at water use inside of your home is the next step.

At home, you typically use water in the kitchen, laundry room and bathrooms.

Kitchen

Kitchens are easy. Change the nozzle (aerator) on your kitchen faucet to 2.2 gallons per minute (gpm). Scrape dishes clean and make sure you're running full dishwasher loads. When purchasing a new dishwasher, make sure that it has the Energy Star label.

Laundry Room

The laundry room is where the most water is used in your home. A non-Energy Star washer uses about 40 gallons per load while an Energy Star washer uses 15 to 23 gallons per load. If you're not ready to purchase a new washer, make sure you are running full washer loads.

Bathrooms

The bathroom is my favorite place to save water. We all are grateful for hot water on a winter morning. I have lived with people who love hot showers so much that they empty the water heater as a daily ritual. A low-flow showerhead is a terrific way to save money and maintain peace at home. I suggest a sneaky tactic when replacing showerheads. Saying "low-flow" causes complaints to begin before the showerhead has even been installed. The alternate reaction is, "Now I can take a hot shower for an hour!" Go ahead and install low-flow showerheads and then wait for complaints from your children, in-laws or roommates. In my experience, I ended up with happy in-laws grateful for a hot shower after four people showered in one morning. My new showerhead has also allowed me to run the clothes washer or dishwasher (by accident) while my spouse is showering. In the past, that would have resulted in a cold shower for my spouse and me feeling bad.


Negative perceptions of low-flow showerheads are because showerheads are not created equal. Stick with WaterSense labeled products. They are tested for



gallon-per-minute flow and spray quality. The spray quality is important for washing away soap and shampoo. WaterSense showerheads use 2 gpm or less. What's been sold in hardware stores and installed in new housing since the 1990s is 2.5 gpm. Consider going a step further with 1.5 gpm or 1 gpm showerheads. Your decision will depend on how much hot water you want to save or how many teenage girls live in your home.

Toilets should be replaced if they use more than 1.6 gallons per flush (gpf). The gpf is typically listed on the top of the bowl or inside of the tank. Toilet replacement is a more costly solution if you're paying a plumber. If you decide to replace your toilets, stick with the WaterSense brand. It's kind of gross, but thankfully WaterSense makes sure that you don't have to flush twice after doing business on the throne.

Lavatory faucet aerators tend to cost \$2 and a five-year-old can install it for you. Make sure that the flow is good enough that you can wash soap off your hands, or play it safe and stick with WaterSense labeled aerators.

As with any home improvement, make sure that you are using products that keep you comfortable and help you to save water, electricity and money. For a groundwater user, consuming less water will help keep the water table high for your family and neighbors who share your aquifer. 

Hannah McKenzie is a residential building science consultant at Advanced Energy in Raleigh (www.advancedenergy.org) who specializes in working with nonprofit developers like Habitat for Humanity to make new affordable housing energy efficient.

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- ½ cup fat-free mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 2 teaspoons fat-free milk
- ⅓ cup dry bread crumbs
- 2 tablespoons salt-free lemon-pepper seasoning
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 1 teaspoon water

- 1 pound orange roughy fillets, cut into 1-inch strips
- 4 corn tortillas (6 inches), warmed
- 1 cup coleslaw mix
- 2 medium tomatoes, diced
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded reduced-fat Mexican cheese blend
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh cilantro

In a small bowl, combine mayonnaise, lime juice and milk; cover and refrigerate until serving.

In a shallow bowl, combine bread crumbs and lemon-pepper. In another shallow bowl, combine egg and water. Dip fish in egg mixture, then roll in crumbs.

In a large nonstick skillet coated with cooking spray, cook fish over medium-high heat for 3–4 minutes on each side or until it flakes easily with a fork. Spoon onto tortillas; top with coleslaw mix, tomatoes, cheese and cilantro. Drizzle with mayonnaise mixture.

Yield: 4 servings



Strawberry Lemon Trifle

- 4 ounces fat-free cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup fat-free vanilla yogurt
- 2 cups cold fat-free milk
- 1 package (3.4 ounces) instant lemon pudding mix
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon peel
- 2½ cups sliced fresh strawberries, divided
- 1 tablespoon white grape juice or water
- 1 prepared angel food cake (10 inches)

In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and yogurt. Add the milk, pudding mix and lemon peel; beat until smooth. In a blender, process ½ cup strawberries and grape juice until smooth.

Tear cake into 1-inch cubes; place a third in a trifle bowl or 3-quart serving bowl. Top with a third of the pudding mixture and half of the remaining strawberries. Drizzle with half of the strawberry sauce. Repeat. Top with the remaining cake and pudding mixture. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

Yield: 14 servings



Buffalo Chicken Dip

- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1 can (10 ounces) chunk white chicken, drained
- ½ cup buffalo wing sauce
- ½ cup ranch salad dressing
- 2 cups (8 ounces) shredded Colby-Monterey Jack cheese
- Tortilla chips

Spread cream cheese into an ungreased, shallow 1-quart baking dish. Layer with chicken, buffalo wing sauce and ranch dressing. Sprinkle with cheese.

Bake uncovered, at 350 degrees for 20–25 minutes or until cheese is melted. Serve warm with tortilla chips.

Yield: 2 cups

From Your Kitchen

Cornbread Cake

(There's no cornmeal in this, but the texture is close to cornbread)

- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup canola oil
- 1½ cups self-rising flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 9-by-13-inch pan and set aside. In a mixing bowl, combine the ingredients in the order listed. Pour into pan evenly and bake for 35 minutes or until tested done.

*This recipe comes from
Mildred Mills of Monroe, a member of
Union Power Cooperative.*

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Review your options to save on health insurance

You've probably seen your health insurance premiums go up. Family health insurance costs for those with employer-sponsored coverage increased by nine percent in 2011, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Maybe it's time for a health insurance checkup. Take a look at what you're paying for coverage, think about which benefits you value most, and read these five tips designed to help you save money on health insurance:

Review your options annually.

Whether you get your health insurance coverage through an employer or purchase an individual policy, review your options at least once per year. Health insurance companies are bringing new, innovative options to the market all the time. Just remember that it's still possible to be declined for an individual policy due to a pre-existing medical condition. Don't cancel your current plan until you're officially approved for a new one.

Cultivate healthy habits.

A recent study conducted by eHealth Inc. found that of over 200,000 consumers with brand-name health plans, smokers paid 14 percent more on average for their monthly premiums compared to non-smokers. Policyholders with a body mass index in the "obese" range paid more than 22 percent more than those in the "normal" BMI range—an average annual savings of \$444.

Try a plan with a higher deductible.

If you're relatively healthy and rarely see the doctor, consider switching to a plan with a higher annual deductible and a lower monthly premium. Some preventive care services will still be available to you with no out-of-pocket cost. Just be sure that you can afford to pay the full deductible in case of a serious injury or illness.




Consider splitting up the family plan.

There's no law that says you need to have the whole family on a single health insurance plan. You may be able to save on your monthly health insurance costs by putting your dependents on a plan of their own.

Mix and match additional benefits.

Even if your employer provides dental and vision benefits, it may be

worthwhile looking into these plans on your own—whether for your whole family, or just for dependents.

For more health insurance shopping tips, visit www.eHealthInsurance.com and request a free copy of its book "Individual Health Insurance For Dummies—Health Care Reform Special Edition." 

—Family Features.com

North Carolina resources

NC Health Info is a free online service that includes links to organizations with information to help consumers understand their health insurance options: www.nchealthinfo.org.

North Carolina Health Choice (NCHC) is a free or reduced-price comprehensive health care program for children. NCHC may be helpful if your family makes too much money to qualify for Medicaid but too little to afford health insurance premiums. Call the N.C. Department of Health & Human Services at (800) 662-7030 or visit www.ncdhhs.gov/dma/healthchoice.

Health Insurance Smart NC (through the N.C. Department of Insurance) is a free service that helps consumers understand their rights, identify enrollment opportunities and file complaints and appeals with health insurance companies. (877) 885-0231 or www.ncdoi.com/Smart.

Finding free attractions at travel destinations

By Karen Olson House

There is nothing like the word “free” to bring on a smile, especially when traveling. Paying for lodging, food, and other basics can leave you feeling spent, and shelling out more money for expensive entertainment can batter your travel budget. Fortunately, even in today’s economy, there are many excellent attractions where admission is free. Here are ideas for finding them in North Carolina, as well as other states.

City and state searches

Visitors centers or chambers of commerce for cities and towns usually have good suggestions for free attractions in their area. Don’t be embarrassed to ask staff. Also, check their websites. For example, the visitors’ website for Asheville, www.exploreasheville.com, offers numerous suggestions for free activities, including those tailored to a particular season.

If you don’t see a link for “free attractions,” or “free events” on a website, try putting those words in a search. On the visitors’ website for Asheboro and other towns in Randolph County, www.heartofnorthcarolina.com, if you type in “free event,” you’ll get a great list.

Also visit a state’s tourism website, and make sure to play with the wording in your search. On a recent check on North Carolina’s tourism website, www.visitnc.com, typing in “free” in the general search field brought up long lists of free travel brochures first. But clicking on the categories “Events” or “Attractions” and then putting in “free” in their accompanying keyword search field, brings up a targeted list of either free events and attractions, respectively.

To find free attractions in a state or city, you can also try www.travelingmom.com (click on “Freebies,” and put in any state) and www.free-attractions.com (listings include free concerts, festivals and zoos).

Museums

If you have a membership at a local museum, you may be able to get a free



Admission is free to many of our nation’s cherished cultural and historic sites, including the Jefferson Memorial in D.C.

admission at a partner museum at your travel destination through a reciprocity program. Check your membership benefits. For a list (by state and also those in Canada) of nearly 200 museums that participate in the Association of Children’s Museums Reciprocal Program, visit www.childrensmuseums.org/visit/reciprocal.htm. Participating North Carolina museums include Exploration Station in Lumberton, The Children’s Playhouse in Boone, Children at Play in Kitty Hawk, Kidzu Children’s Museum in Chapel Hill and Fascinate-U Children’s Museum in Fayetteville.

D.C. and the Big Apple

Washington, D.C., and New York City are among popular U.S. cities that boast an impressive array of free attractions and activities. For free in D.C., you can see money made at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, pretend to be a pilot in a mock cockpit at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, and enjoy a free early evening concert at the Kennedy Center. For more, visit www.washington.org. In New

York City, for free you can explore its unique neighborhoods on guided tours by “Big Apple Greeters” (informed locals), climb aboard the Staten Island Ferry for bay views of the Statue of Liberty and the Manhattan skyline and talk with robots at the Sony Wonder Technology Lab, a technology and entertainment museum. www.nycgo.com.

Scenic drives are free

Remember that getting there can be half the fun. America’s Byways, the term for a collection of 150 uniquely distinctive roads, are akin to hidden treasure. They take you through magnificent, unspoiled landscapes and introduce you to friendly small towns and local culture. Awe-inspiring drives in the South include the Blue Ridge Parkway (North Carolina and Virginia), Cherohala Skyway (North Carolina and Tennessee), Outer Banks Scenic Byway, and Russell-Brasstown Scenic Byway (Georgia). 1-800-4BYWAYS (1-800-429-9297) or www.byways.org. 📍

National parks offer big value and historical enrichment

By Karen Olson House

When it comes to vacations, America's national parks are a perennial favorite. These unique treasures number nearly 400 now, boasting magnificent landscapes and historical enrichment.

Lately, they've been getting even better. Visitors are reaping the benefits of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act passed in 2009, which funded improvements to national park facilities and roads. Ninety-nine percent of those park projects are completed, according to Jeff Olson, spokesman for the National Park Service (NPS) in Washington, D.C. As just one example, the scenic Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park in Virginia sports dozens of new overlooks with jaw-dropping views and new interpretative signs.

The beauty and slower pace found from a park vacation have a way of drawing families or couples together. Kids remember how to make their own fun, and those in their twenties finally bond, adult to adult, with their parents. And even the most sullen teenager will crack a smile by the end of a day or two.

"For generations now, people have introduced members of their family to national parks," says Olson. "Parents and grandparents are now introducing their children to parks. These are places where you learn about American heritage and culture."

For lodging, people sometimes picture a grand historic lodge or a tent campground. While these are great options, there are typically other choices through concessioners in national parks or in nearby towns. One reason that beautiful Great Smoky Mountains Park is continually ranked the No. 1 most popular U.S. national park is accessibility. It's close to Gatlinburg, Tenn.; Cherokee, N.C.; and Bryson City, N.C., which cater to visitors with a wide variety of affordable

Admission bargains

The majority of America's nearly 400 national parks don't have any entrance fee, including Great Smoky Mountains Park. Admission for parks that do charge is from \$3 to \$25 (good for an entire carload of people for a week). There are also bargain annual passes, good for more than 2,000 federal recreation sites, including one for seniors for \$10.

The National Park Service has fee-free days in 2012 at more than 100 national parks that usually charge entrance fees, including the Wright Brothers National Memorial in Manteo. Upcoming dates include:

April 21–29 National Park Week

June 9 Get Outdoors Day

To find out which parks are holding fee-free days, visit www.nps.gov/findapark/feefreeparksbystate.htm (search by park's name or by state).

Many park-related hotels, restaurants, shops and tour operators offer specials on fee-free days. For more, visit the National Park Hospitality Association at www.parkpartners.org/Special-Offers-for-2011.html and the National Parks Promotions Council at www.nationalparksonline.org/special-offers.




The Wright Brothers National Memorial in Kill Devil Hills commemorates Orville and Wilbur Wright, two ingenious bicycle mechanics who first achieved powered, controlled flight.

accommodations, restaurants, shops, museums, and other attractions.

At North Carolina's Outer Banks, you can also choose from a range of lodging options and fun attractions while visiting interesting National Park Service sites such as the Wright Brothers National Memorial in Kill Devil Hills, Fort Raleigh Historic Site on Roanoke Island, and some 70 miles of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

Whether you are visiting a rural or urban national park, if you enjoy technology you won't be disappointed. Nowadays, you can deepen your experiences through your smart phone and other mobile devices at visitors' centers and exhibits. National park websites sport live webcams, podcasts, and links to lively social media as well. Apps are abundant. For example, visitors to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., can use the NPS's free app, which displays the user's location, highlights historical and cultural points of interest, provides tour suggestions, and gives directions to more than 70 sites. The Great Smoky Mountains Park app includes trip planning, recreation and services, along with a park map. Everything works without a cell signal, too.

For more information about these parks and others across the U.S., call the National Park Service at (202) 208-3818 or visit www.nps.gov. 

Take care to install and program thermostat properly

Programmable thermostats, when used correctly, have the potential to save up to \$180 a year on your heating and cooling costs, according to [Energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov). If you're considering purchasing and installing one yourself, it's important to install and program it correctly to save the most energy and money.

By Magen Howard

Installation

First, your thermostat should be situated on an interior wall, about five feet above the floor and away from heating and cooling vents and other drafty places such as doors and windows. Keep it away from skylights, direct sunlight or lamps. (If you have problems with the position of your thermostat, hire an electrician move it.)

Next, shut off the electricity before you begin the replacement. Programmable thermostats require a low-voltage wiring installation and will have two to 10 wires, according to [Energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov). As with any home-wiring project, safety is the priority. Read instructions carefully and exercise caution throughout the installation. If you are replacing an old thermostat that has a mercury switch, take care not to break the tube that holds the toxic metal.

Refer to the manual on how to wire your new thermostat. A handy tip:

Installing a Programmable Thermostat

Keep these tips in mind when installing a new thermostat: Stay away from doors and windows, lamps, heating and cooling vents, and make sure it's mounted about five feet off the floor.



Source: ENERGYSTAR.gov, Home Depot

once your old thermostat is removed from the wall, wrap the wires around a pencil to keep them from falling back into the wall.

If the project is more complicated than a basic replacement, have a certified HVAC technician handle it.

To see a start-to-finish thermostat replacement on video, visit www.youtube.com and put in "Home Depot thermostat installation" in the search field.

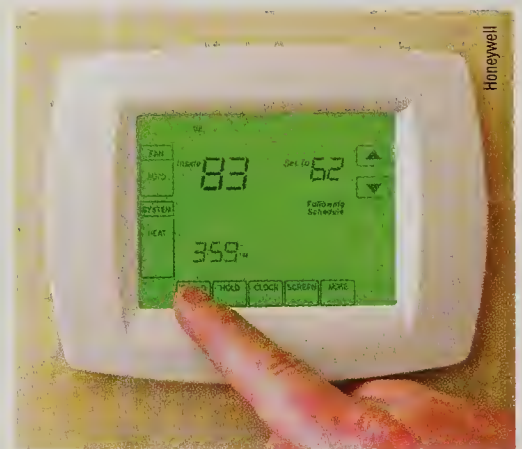
Choosing the right thermostat

Programmable thermostats are not for everyone. They're best for families who are away during the day and homes with HVAC systems other than heat pumps. When a heat pump works in its heating mode, setting back the thermostat can cause the unit to operate inefficiently, thereby canceling out any savings achieved by lowering the temperature. Maintaining a moderate setting is the most cost-effective practice for homes with heat pumps.

If you decide a programmable thermostat is right for your home, consider which type best suits your lifestyle:

- **7-DAY** models allow you to set different programs every day and provide the most flexibility.
- **5+2-DAY** models follow the same schedule during the week and a different one for weekends.
- **5-1-1** models keep the same schedule during the week and different ones for Saturday and Sunday.

Many units come with multiple features, such as voice programming options and vacation settings.




It's important to properly program your thermostat to get the most cost savings.

Getting the most savings

Programmable thermostats enhance your home's efficiency only when set properly. To be sure to save, set the temperature back for at least eight hours at time—for example, when you're at work during the day or asleep at night. You can save 5 percent to 15 percent per year on your heating bills by setting your thermostat back 10 to 15 degrees over that period.

Program the thermostat to begin warming or cooling to your desired temperature shortly before you get home or wake up, so your home is comfortable when you need it to be. The goal is to set it, and then leave it alone.

Energy Star's savings calculator can help you see how much you can save. Visit www.energystar.gov and type in "programmable thermostat calculator" in the search field. 

Magen Howard writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for NRECA.

Sources: Energystar.gov (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), EnergySavers.gov (U.S. Department of Energy), Home Depot and Cooperative Research Network, the research arm of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

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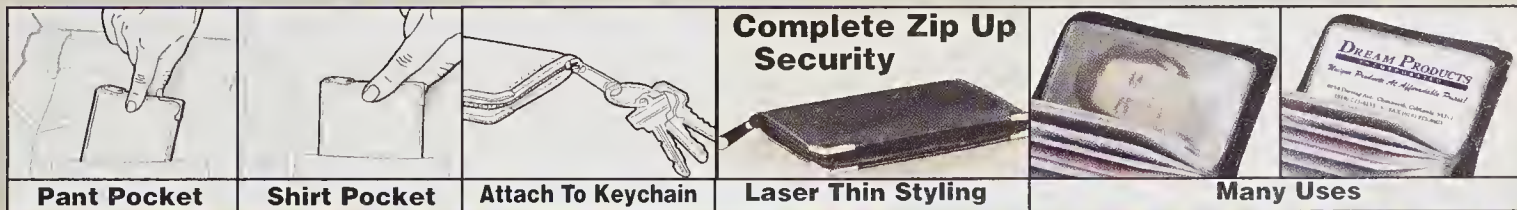
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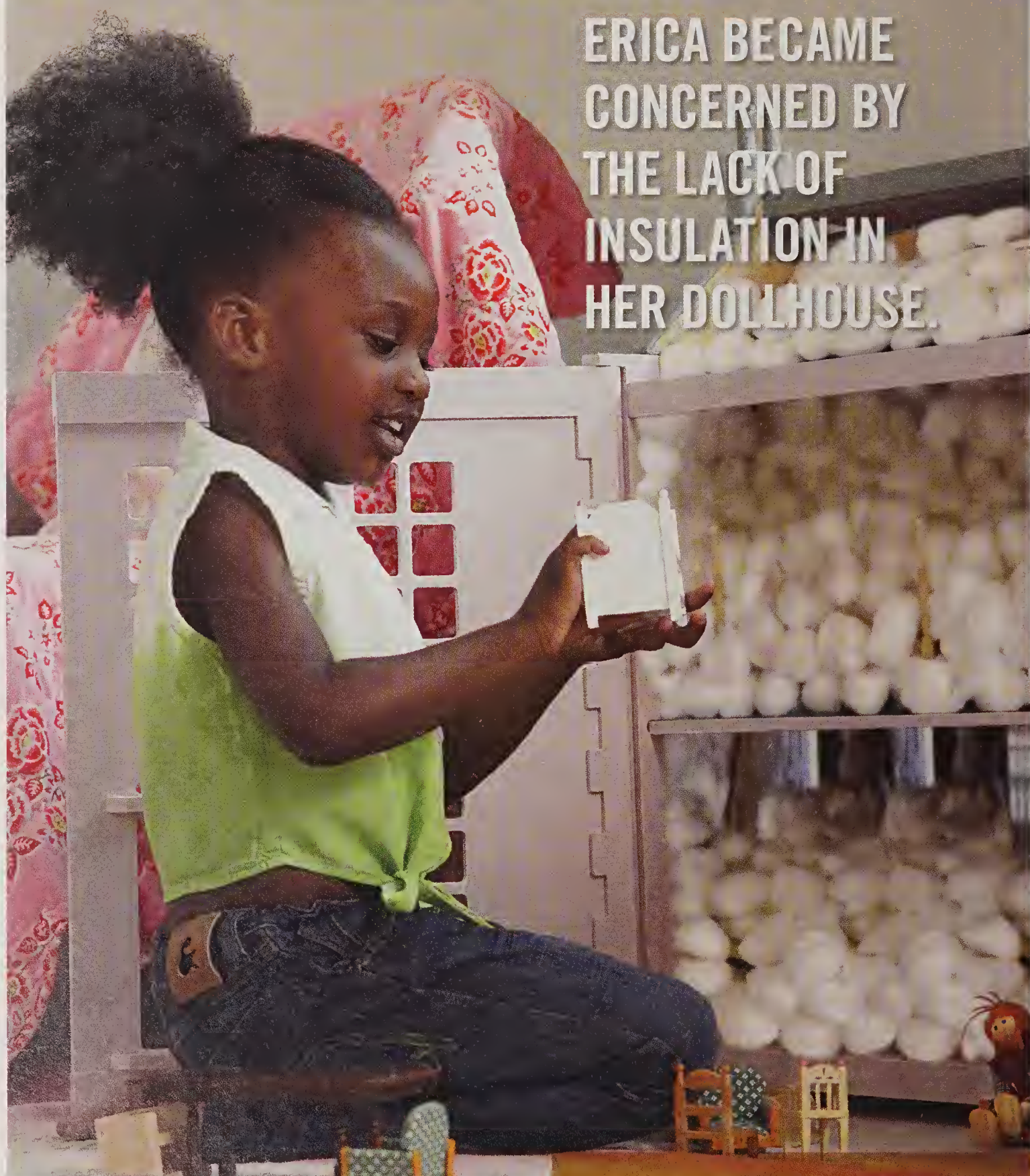
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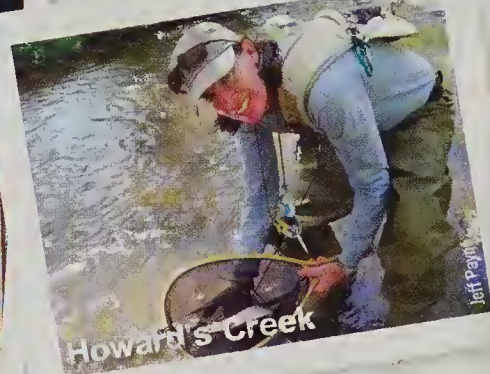


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Adventures



From one end to the other, North Carolina is about as diverse as any state in the nation. We've got hard gemstones in the west, soft crabs on the coast and red clay in the middle. The tobacco we grow in the mountains is different than

what we grow in the east. What we live in, how we drive, what we eat and how we talk varies from one region to another.

Our annual Touchstone Energy Travel Guide encourages you to experience this variety firsthand.

This year, we offer you six great travel stories about interesting areas in the mountains, Piedmont and coast, plus an invitation to our public gardens. The adventures may be familiar to you, or they may not. In any case, each holds the promise for a lot of travel fun.

As you make your way through this guide and through the countryside, you can be assured that a Touchstone Energy cooperative is nearby.

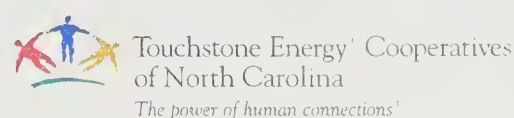
Thanks to everyone who helped us compile this guide, and to our sponsors: the cooperatives and the advertisers on pages 38 to 43.



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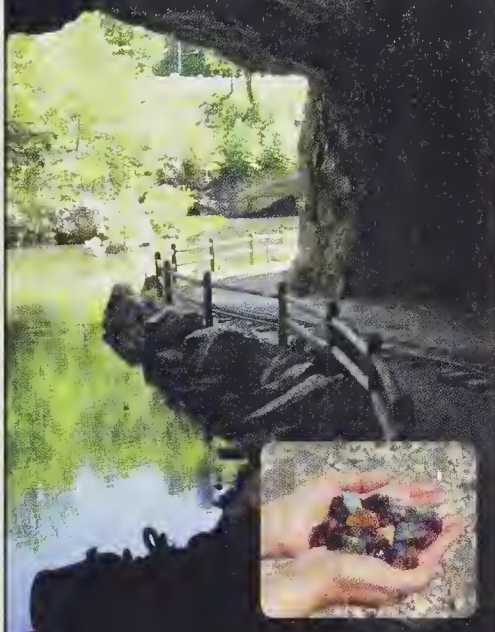


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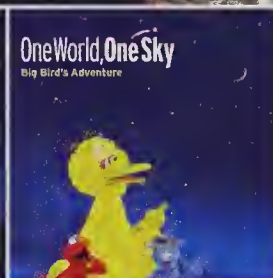


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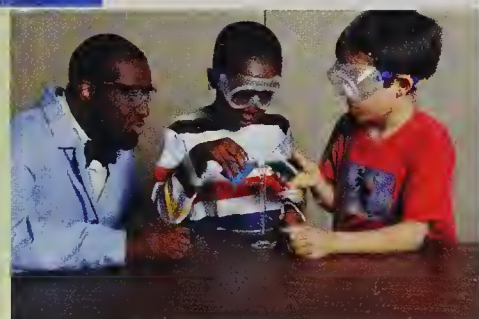
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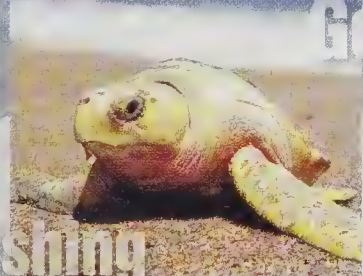
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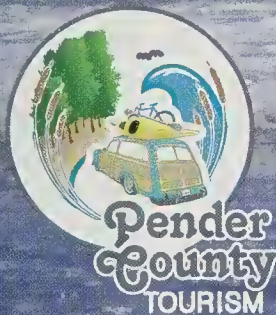
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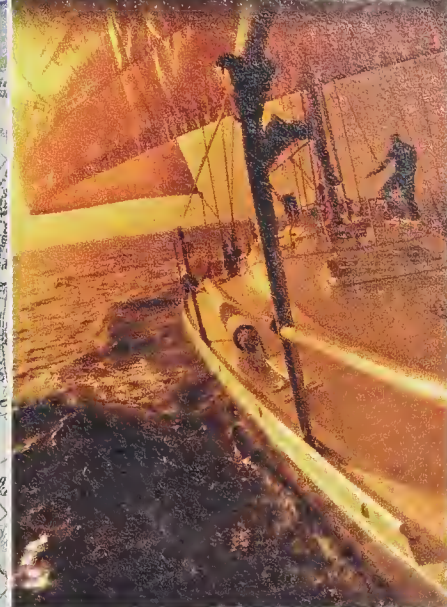


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Adventures

By Karen Olson House



Learn and conserve:


Appreciate your public gardens on May 11

The fourth annual National Public Gardens Day, scheduled for Friday, May 11, is a national celebration that invites communities to explore the beauty of their local green spaces while raising awareness of the important role public gardens play in promoting education and environmental preservation.

The American Public Gardens Association, based in Kennett Square, Pa., lists more than 500 North American public gardens, most of which will be celebrating the day in their own unique ways with special activities for schools, families, garden enthusiasts and other visitors. For example, Airlie Gardens in Wilmington will offer free admission, special events for children and a few other surprises dur-

ing extended hours (9 a.m. to 7 p.m.) on National Public Gardens Day.

Annually scheduled on the Friday preceding Mother's Day weekend, some APGA member garden activities will continue through Mother's Day weekend. Examples of APGA's diverse members include botanical gardens, college/university gardens, arboreta, educational gardens, farm gardens, historical landscapes, zoos and museum gardens. For more information on National Public Gardens Day or to find an APGA garden near you, visit www.NationalPublicGardensDay.org, "LIKE" the National Public Gardens Day Facebook page and follow the National Public Gardens Day Twitter feed, @NPGD.

Note: Some North Carolina APGA member gardens are below, but not all. To find others, as well as learn about other North Carolina gardens open to the public but which are not APGA gardens, go to www.visitnc.com. 

Visit a North Carolina public garden

AIRLIE GARDENS

300 Airlie Road
Wilmington, NC 28403
(910) 452-6393
www.airliegarden.org

Historic waterfront plantation estate's 67 acres that feature formal gardens, a butterfly house, wildlife, historic structures, walking trails, sculptures, camellias and more than 100,000 azaleas.

CAPE FEAR

BOTANICAL GARDEN

536 N. Eastern Drive
Fayetteville, NC 28305
(910) 486-0221
www.capefearbg.org

A 77-acre garden located on the Cape Fear and Cross Creek Rivers that includes a camellia collection, daylily garden, nature trail, perennials, sundial garden and heritage garden.

DANIEL STOWE

BOTANICAL GARDEN

6500 S. New Hope Road
Belmont, NC 28012
(704) 825-4490
www.dsbg.org

Located on 450 acres along the banks of Lake Wylie just west of Charlotte, it includes more than 110 acres of themed gardens, with botanical gardens, perennials, woodland trail, canal garden, cottage garden, kitchen garden, fountains and visitor pavilion.

ELIZABETHAN GARDENS,

1411 National Park Drive
Manteo, NC 27954
(252) 473-3234
www.elizabethangardens.org

A formal garden that includes a sunken garden, rose garden, woodland and wildlife garden, camellias and rhododendrons, overlook terrace, with statuary through the garden.

JC RAULSTON ARBORETUM

4415 Beryl Road
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(919) 515-3132
www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum

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www.gardeningnhc.org

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NORTH CAROLINA BOTANICAL GARDEN

University of NC at Chapel Hill
100 Old Mason Farm Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27599
(919) 962-0522
www.ncbg.unc.edu

The North Carolina Botanical Garden comprises more than 1,000 acres, including 10 acres of display gardens and a number of natural areas. The main visitor site, the Display Gardens and Education Center, is located off of Old Mason Farm Road and the

US 15-501 Bypass in Chapel Hill, and features habitat display gardens that interpret the plants and vegetation of North Carolina, perennial borders, a garden of flowering plant families, nature trails, a "green" education center with exhibits, and more.

PAUL J. CIENER

BOTANICAL GARDEN

215 South Main St.
Kernersville, NC 27285
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www.pjcbg.org

This seven-acre site features ten gardens showcasing more than 1,000 different plants and includes an award-winning perennial border, a kitchen garden and a large spring-flowering bulb display.

REYNOLDA GARDENS OF WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

100 Reynolda Village
Winston-Salem, NC 27106
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www.reynoldagardens.org

These woodlands, fields, wetlands and formal gardens were once part of the R.J. Reynolds estate. A greenhouse and conservatory contain educational displays of tropical and succulent plants and an extensive orchid collection.

SARAH P. DUKE GARDENS

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THE NORTH CAROLINA ARBORETUM

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www.ncarboretum.org

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BOTANICAL GARDENS

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Charlotte, NC 28223
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www.gardens.uncc.edu

These consist of three main areas — the McMillan Greenhouse complex, the three-acre Susie Harwood Garden, and the seven-acre Van Landingham Glen, all located together on the east side of the UNC-Charlotte campus. Highlights include orchids, desert plants, carnivorous and tropical plants, native wildflowers, and a winter garden, Asian garden and water garden.

WING HAVEN GARDEN AND BIRD SANCTUARY

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Adventures

By Ann Green



Way out in Ashe County:

Elk Knob State Park, New River and the Todd community

For the inexperienced hiker, it can seem quite daunting to trek up the 1.8-mile summit trail at Elk Knob State Park off Meat Camp Road in Todd. But the wide gravel trails at the bottom and the switchbacks higher up reduce it to a moderately challenging hike through the dense woods.

You can stop and rest on stone benches and delight in the wintergreen smell from the yellow birch trees. More than halfway up, you see mounds of green moss on rocks and ferns scattered throughout the forest.

It takes about an hour to reach the 5,520-foot summit. To the north, you see White Top Mountain in Virginia and Pilot Mountain in Surry County. To the south, are Mt. Mitchell—the highest mountain east of the Mississippi—Roan Mountain, Grandfather Mountain and Beech Mountain.

“This is my first time up here,” says Katie Gray, chief naturalist at Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation. “The views are incredible. You can get a 360-degree view up here.”

Besides the beautiful vista and new summit trail that was completed in September 2011, Elk Knob Park—which is part

of the Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation service area—has a unique ecosystem.

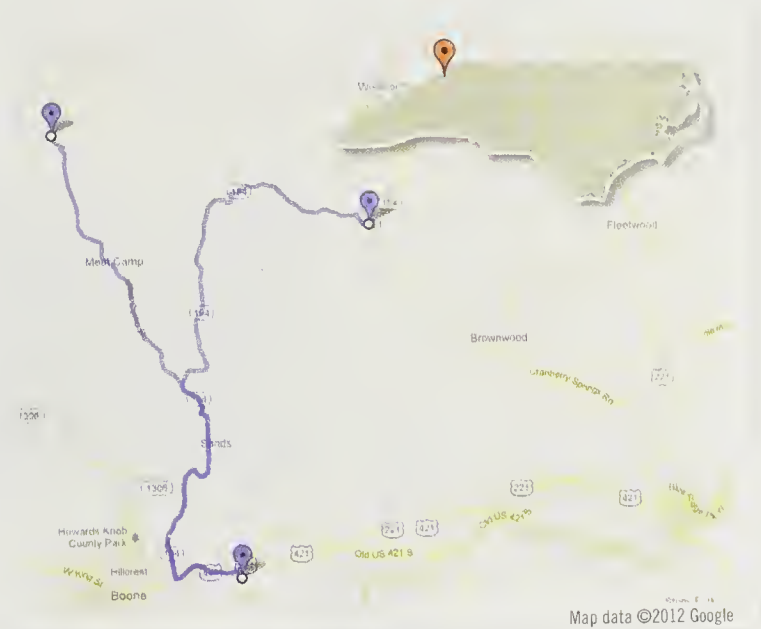
“We are at the headwaters of the North Fork of the New River,” says Elk Knob State Park superintendent Larry Trivette. “This is a high elevation park with northern hardwood forest. There are a lot of beech and birch trees. At the top, the beech trees are stunted because of the extreme weather and only reach 10 to 12 feet.”

Elk Knob park’s bedrock is predominantly amphibolite, a dark metamorphic rock that breaks down into a sweet soil that supports rare plants like Gray’s lily and large purple fringed orchid. “You don’t see rhododendron, white pine and hemlock in this park like in other mountainous areas of North Carolina,” says Trivette.

The forest and rock outcrops also support a number of neotropical songbirds such as the chestnut-sided warbler and a variety of wildlife, including the black bear, bobcat, wild turkey and white-tailed deer.

Besides hiking the park’s new trail, visitors can cross-country ski and snowshoe on trails that head down into the cove. Contact the park office to get directions before heading out in the snow, says Elk Knob park ranger Kelly Safley.

This spring, new backpack campsites will open. “You



can hike [in] from one to two miles,” says Trivette. “We will have two group camps and six additional camps for four to six people.”

The Todd community

After leaving the park, follow NC 194 to Todd. When you see the sign, go down a steep hill to the peaceful community that is on the South Fork of the New River and straddles both Ashe and Watauga counties.

Originally called Elk X Roads, the tiny village reached its heyday during the early part of the 20th century when it was at the end of the Virginia-Carolina railroad.

Seventeen historical buildings are nestled in the valley, including the restored Elkland Depot that now houses RiverGirl Fishing Co.

Not far from the depot is the Todd General Store with its wide front porch and pressed tin siding. “Many of the buildings in Todd are covered in pressed tin because of a fire in 1920 that burned the depot and two stores,” says Jim Lewis, president of the Todd Community Preservation Organization.

Inside the store, which was established in 1914, a variety of memorabilia is displayed on the counters and walls, including a bronze 1914 National cash register. On the back wall, advertisements for Green’s Muscadine Punch and Old Fashioned Root Beer bring you back to a simpler time.

“I come down here twice a year and always come to the Todd General Store,” says Shawn Seim of Rochester, Mass. “I love the old feel of the store, the old floors and old history.”

Folks also frequent the store for the antiques and food. “We come for the great grilled cheese and Reuben sandwiches and the bottled drinks that remind me of my childhood,” says Dan Hassig, a Blue Electric co-op member in Fleetwood.

During the spring, summer and fall, the store comes alive with the sweet sounds of bluegrass music, as well as storytelling and book signings. “All of the store’s activities are related to Appalachian culture,” says Virginia Mann, who owns the store along with her husband Robert Mann.

If you have a sweet tooth, head over to the Todd Mercantile & Bakery where an old wood stove sits in the middle of the downstairs. New owners Helen Barnes Rielly and Jack Rielly will be selling staples for local customers, as well as artists’ work. The couple is also hoping to build a stage upstairs for performers.

When visiting Todd, you can indulge in a variety of outdoors activities. Rent a bike and pedal past old farm-houses along a paved, railroad grade road that runs for 10 miles along the tea-colored New River and northward into Fleetwood. You also can kayak and go tubing in the river and fly fish in nearby creeks.

“We have more trout than we know what to do with,” says fisheries biologist Kelly McCoy, the owner of RiverGirl Fishing Co. “You can fish for trout with a regular spinning rod. However, fly fishing is a more passionate and intricate way to catch fish.”

Throughout the year, the community hosts concerts and other special events at the Walter and Annie Cook Memorial Park overlooking the river.

On July 4th, the Elkland Art Center Liberty Parade features hand-made puppets related to an environmental theme. Last year, participants carried a giant 10-person puppet shaped like a mountain through the community.

“You learn about the environment by becoming the environment,” says Martha Enzmann, founder of the Elkland Art Center in Todd. “The parade is about good, clean fun. It shows the real community that we have in Todd.” 🍷

Ann Green is a freelance writer based in Raleigh.

Resources

ELK KNOB STATE PARK

(828) 297-7261

elk.knob@ncdenr.gov

www.ncparks.gov/Visit/parks/elkn/main.php

TODD

Todd Community Preservation Organization

(336) 877-2565

info@toddn.org

LIBERTY PARADE AND ELKLAND ART CENTER

(336) 877-5016

lexie@eklandartcenter.org

www.elklandartcenter.org

Adventures

By Karen Olson House



A place in the country: Farm vacations in North Carolina's mountains

It used to be you grew up on a farm or were close to someone who owned one. You knew which part of the cow your cuts of meat came from, and you cooked with vegetables freshly plucked from your garden.

Nowadays, the only food some folks, be they adults or kids, may ever see is at the grocery store, packaged on shelves and frozen in bins. The only pasture they may see is on TV, and their only animal a dog or cat.

Enter the farm stay: a great way to get back in touch with nature. The number of North Carolina farms that offer them is increasing, due partly to agritourism efforts to boost income and also raise awareness about locally sourced goods.

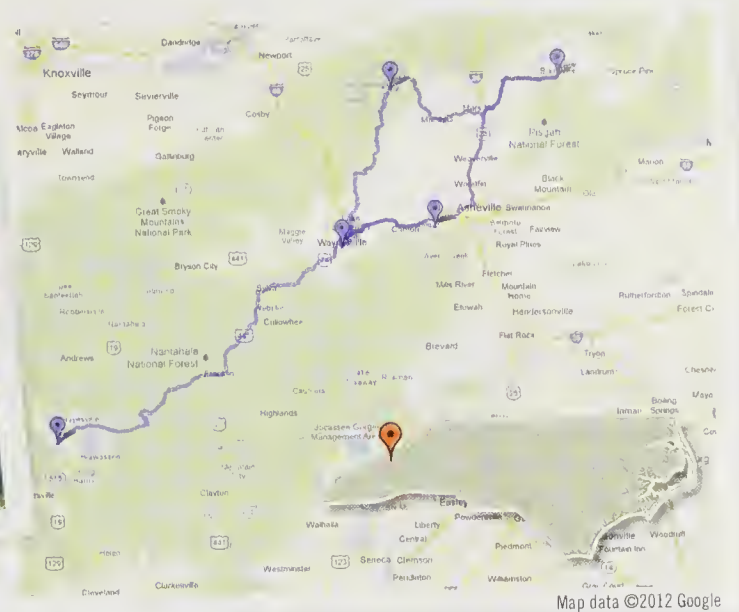
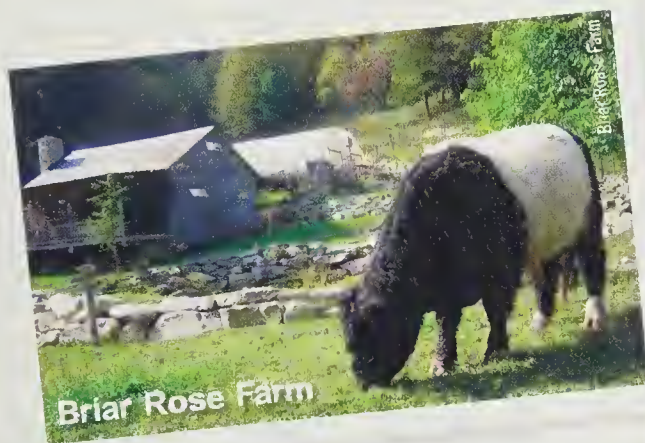
Basically, farm stays range from simple, country-style digs to elegant retreats. Each is unique to its site, its working operations and its owners. You might sleep in a farmhouse guest room, cabin, cottage, converted barn, or even a tent near a creek. Generally, guests should not expect high-

thread counts and high teas — while farms can be very hospitable, they aren't fancy hotels. Prices per night vary but generally start around \$75 and up, with many stays priced to what a bed-and-breakfast stay would cost in the area (\$100–\$150 or so).

Guests don't have to do chores. But if you wish to, you can sometimes help with gathering eggs, feeding chickens, milking cows and grooming horses. (Sorry, but you probably can't drive the tractor because of insurance rules.)

Once you have pulled a carrot out of the ground or gathered warm eggs, you better understand why food costs so much and may appreciate organic food more. At Jordan Blackley Farm in Candler (about 15 minutes south of Asheville), guests learn about shitake mushrooms, black and red raspberries, and bee-keeping. Co-owner Cindy Jordan, a certified journeyman beekeeper and Haywood EMC member, has a child's bee suit and adult bee suit on hand, and upon request allows guests to look into the hives.

The color and flavor of local honey is determined by its regional nectar source and weather. On a tour, Jordan clarified how different trees blooming at different times of the year can influence the bees' honey. For example, when tulip



poplars are blooming (in the spring here), its nectar during that time creates a different honey flavor than when other trees are blooming. Hence the name, tulip poplar honey, a dark, delicious treat.

In the mountains, you often see sourwood honey showcased at farm stands, farmers markets and local shops. The yummy honey, produced mainly in the Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains, comes from native sourwood trees here that bloom from mid-June to late July. Locals call their bell-shaped, sweet-smelling white blooms “angel fingers.” The name sourwood comes from the odorous leaves, which taste sour. In a good year, you can simply shake the blooms for tasty drops of nectar.

As far as food on farm vacations, expect tasty vittles. Guests at the Jordan Blackley farm are treated to a jar each of fresh honey and thick jam. Many “haycations” also include breakfast and, depending on the farm, organic eggs, fruit just picked off the vine, homemade sausage and other goodies.

At Briar Rose Farm in Hot Springs (about 40 minutes northwest of Asheville), overnight guests can explore 250 acres, pick summer produce and seasonal berries, tour a greenhouse with hydroponic lettuce, visit with goats and relatively rare Belted Galloway cows, collect eggs from chickens, fish from trout streams, hike to the a mountain-top fire tower and splash in the creek. Co-owner Judie Hansen, a member of French Broad EMC, says guests are sometimes surprised when learning about farm animals. Take, for example, the versatility of goats. “Basically, just one goat can provide a family of four with milk and dairy, fiber for spinning, and also soap, she explains. “Plus, they are friendly, smart and clean.” Co-owner Tom Hare enjoys showing interested guests how his sawmill works and will give rides in his newly restored 1940 Ford Coupe (which has a history as a moonshine runner).

Some of the many other mountain farms that offer stays include Tender Mercy Retreat in Waynesville, Bedford Falls Alpaca Farm in Warne and Blueberry Cottage at Mountain Farm in Burnsville.

Some proprietors use the term “farm stays” loosely, and their “farm” is more like a vacation rental that happens to have chickens nearby. If you want to experience a working operation, look for one. A farm’s own website should describes rooms, activities and amenities. Hosts who allow chore participation usually mention it in descriptions. Another sign of a farm’s commitment to involve and educate guests is stated farm tours, informal or formal, as well as classes and workshops in the farm’s particular expertise, be it cheese making, spinning or other relevant operations. If you are unsure as to whether or not a particular farm is right for you, call or e-mail the host, and ask what a typical day for guests is like. 🍷

Farms stays across North Carolina

Of course, there are great farm stays all across North Carolina, not just the mountains. For a listing of North Carolina’s agritourism accommodations, go to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services website at www.visitncfarms.com and click on “Farm Bed & Breakfasts, Country Cabins, and Retreats.” A recent check showed 55 listings, although a few appeared to offer only day activities (not overnight stays) and were more like retreats than working farm stays. A source that emphasizes working operations is the website listing portal www.farmstays.us, designed to connect guests with working farm and ranch stays across the U.S. Specify “North Carolina” and you get more than 40 places. Its Advanced Search also lets you check boxes for “pets” and “children” and other important details.

Adventures

By Karen Olson House



Where horses are a mane attraction: The Sandhills

There's one word that most everyone thinks of when it comes to this area: Golf, with a capital "G." And with supreme reason—the Sandhills region boasts 43 golf courses within a 15-mile radius, distinguished golf history and has such a first-rate reputation that the 2014 U.S. Men's and Women's Open will be played here (on the famous No. 2 course in Pinehurst).

A word most people don't usually mention is "horses." But in Pinehurst, Southern Pines, Aberdeen and other Sandhills communities, equine pursuits are passionately pursued. Their sandy trails and rolling pastureland have attracted equestrian enthusiasts, breeders and trainers for years. The area is a significant center for Olympic

equine training and qualifying, and sees some of the country's finest standardbred harness horses, trotters and pacers, as well as hunting, racing and steeplechase thoroughbreds.

From polo to fox hunting, there are numerous equestrian events to enjoy. A good place to start is the Harness Track in Pinehurst, where you can watch jockeys and their horses hone cart and harness racing skills. The facility has been a winter training center for standardbred horses since 1915. Champion trotters and pacers train there from October through May 1, roughly 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Saturday. In summer and early fall, it hosts horse shows and other community events such as dog shows and rugby matches. (800) 644-TROT or www.villageofpinehurst.org

The little, unassuming eatery there called the Pinehurst Track Restaurant is open year-round, seven days a week. This local institution is owned by former harness racing track legend Real "Coco" Cormier and his wife. (Breakfast

served daily; Wednesday through Sunday hours include lunch.) Touted for its blueberry pancakes, the restaurant's waitresses also serve scrumptious butterscotch pancakes and tasty diner fare such as home fries and club sandwiches. (910) 295-2597.

Whether you want to see horses, ride yours, drive a carriage or simply walk awhile, visit the Walthour-Moss Foundation, a 4,000 acre-plus nature preserve about a mile from Southern Pines. World-class drivers and horse riders come here for its trails. It's a true wildlife refuge, where you may spot the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker as well as deer, raccoons and fox. Open daily, sunrise to sunset. (910) 695-7811 or www.walthour-moss.org

For horseback riding (rentals and lessons), call the Equestrian Center at McLendon Hills in West End (about seven miles from Pinehurst). (910) 673-4971 or www.mclendonhills.com

Horse-drawn carriage rides are available in Pinehurst (30-minute tours). (910) 235-8456.

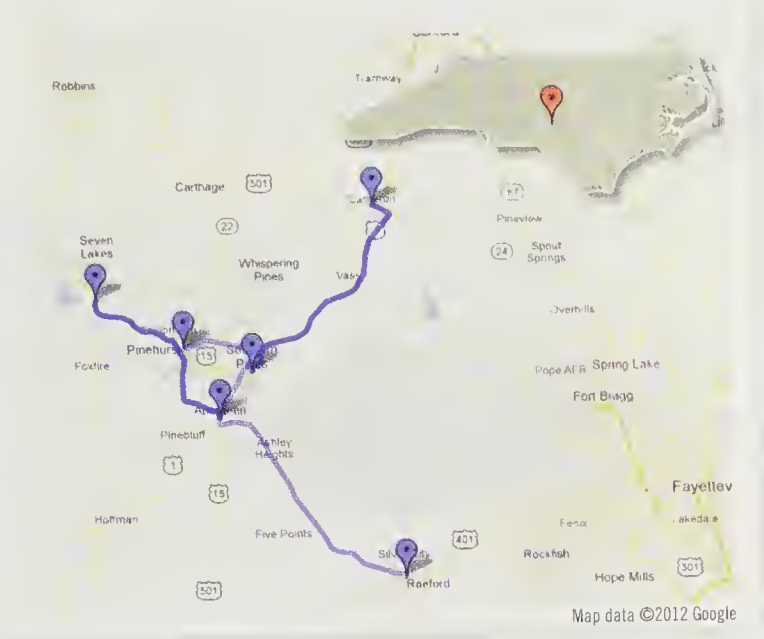
Major equine activities extend into Hoke County, too. Carolina Horse Park at Five Points in Raeford (about 25 minutes south of Southern Pines) is a nationally recognized facility. The interested public can watch the 250-acre park's jumping, hunting and dressage shows and competitions. All are free, too, except its popular Stoneybrook Steeplechase, set for Saturday, April 7. Steeplechase racing puts thoroughbred horses over various fences in dazzling tests of speed, power and stamina. In addition to watching championship racing, you can enjoy hat contests, a mechanical bull, beer garden, climbing wall, bounce houses, pony rides, stick horse racing and a petting zoo. \$25 for advance tickets; \$30 on race day. Discounts available for military and select Harris Teeters. (910) 875-2074 or www.carolinahorsepark.com

Shopping

You can score big in downtown Southern Pines, which has fashion boutiques, gift shops, coffee shops and bistros. Fun stops include Art Nutz Gourmet Gallery, River Jack Trading Co. and C. Cups Cupcakery. The historic Village of Pinehurst is laid out New England-style, with restored historic buildings, charming restaurants such as Lady Bedfords Tea Parlour and specialty shops such as Green Gate Olive Oils, where you can sample dozens of quality oils and other gourmet wares. Aberdeen's Historic District also has enchanting discoveries, including Old Silk Route (Asian-inspired furniture and tapestries) and European pastries at The Bakehouse. As far as antiques, you can hunt and gather novel, rare items in all three towns. If you have the time, drive out to Cameron, a historic village brimming with antique shops. Its Spring Antiques Street Fair is Saturday, May 5. (910) 245-3055 or www.antiquesofcameron.com

Sandhills Horticultural Gardens

Located at Sandhills Community College, east of Pinehurst, its paths wind around to reveal 14 themed gardens, including a whimsical children's garden, a new Japanese garden and a formal English garden with a fountain courtyard. Admission is free (donations accepted). Open daily year-round. (910) 695-3882 or www.sandhillshorticulturalgardens.com



Malcolm Blue Farm

This antebellum farm in Aberdeen features a farmhouse with authentic furnishings of everyday life during the 1800s, a gristmill, well, barns and museum exhibits on the Blue family, Scottish settlers, lumbering, pioneer women, the Aberdeen and Rockfish Railroad, mourning etiquette, Civil War Battle of Monroe's Crossroads and more. The farm is usually open to visitors Friday and Saturday afternoons (except winter months) and hosts a Bluegrass Festival in late spring, a Historical Crafts and Farmskills Festival in September and a Christmas event. For 2012 updates, (910) 944-7558 or www.malcolmbbluefarm.com

Uncommon attractions

A fascinating military museum is tucked in back of Gulley's Garden Center in Southern Pines. Gulley's is a gem in itself, sporting creative displays like vintage gas pumps amid windmill palms and fragrant shrubs. But after you've browsed it, walk out back to the "Company Store" building. The military exhibit features rare posters, uniforms, weaponry, photographs and other memorabilia from the Civil War to Afghanistan amassed by co-owner and Vietnam veteran Pete Gulley. (910) 692-3223 or www.gulleysgardencenter.com

Equally unexpected is the quirky but exceptional taxidermy/antique tool museum spanning three floors inside the tame-looking Christian Book Store in Southern Pines. A pastor founded the curious catacomb collection, and you'll see fervent messages about creationism throughout. A true slice of Americana you'll never see elsewhere, the award-winning taxidermy sections showcase more than 100 lifelike animals including a mother kangaroo with a baby in her pouch and a full mount timber wolf. The vintage tools include rare artifacts such as a blind carpenter's Braille gauge and an elephant trainer's tool. Money donations accepted. (910) 692-3471 or www.thecreationmuseum.com (Warning: the website doesn't do this attraction justice). 📍

Pinehurst, Southern Pines, Aberdeen Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

(800) 346-5362
www.homeofgolf.com

Adventures

By Renee C. Gannon



Covering all the bases in Winston-Salem

Split by Interstate 40 in Forsyth County, Winston-Salem is a mid-size city born from many personalities. The Moravians first settled here in 1753 at a site called Wachovia within the forks of the Muddy Creek. The villages of Bethabara and Bethania soon followed, and with the burgeoning population, the town of Salem bore its first buildings in 1766. So what about Winston? Founded in 1849, this small town and Salem were joined together by the U.S. Post Office in 1889, then officially became Winston-Salem in 1913.

The big Ts of the South, tobacco and textiles, fueled the city's growth. R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and the J. Wesley Hanes's Shamrock Hosiery Mills (later Hanesbrands) employed 60 percent of the area's

workers. Other businesses filled in the gaps, Wachovia Bank and Trust, Texas Pete, Quality Oil, Piedmont Airlines and Krispy Kreme led the once-rural towns of Winston and Salem into the urban landscape.

Embracing the past

A visit to Old Salem (www.oldsalem.org) should be on everyone's list. Located in downtown Winston-Salem, the 2- to 3-hour walking tour highlights Moravian life in the 18th and 19th centuries. This living-history site offers craftwork demonstrations with a gunsmith, silversmith, cabinetmakers, cobblers, carpenters, potters and bakers, as well as outside events. The silversmith noted that he can create 150 silver spoons in three hours, but it then takes one hour per spoon for the finished product.

Most craftsmen are located in the Single Brothers House and workshop. At this stop, visitors learn Moravians lived by the choir system, where members are separated into "choirs" by gender, age and marital status. The Single Sisters House is now a part of Salem College.

Adventures

By Michael E.C. Gery



The spirit of independence: Halifax County and the Roanoke Valley

They say "the spirit of independence" was born in Halifax County. When you visit here, you soon find out that you are free to do just about anything. The Roanoke Valley region has carefully preserved its heritage and natural wonders while welcoming any free spirit to have a good time. Your first stop should be Halifax County Visitors Center, 260 Premier Blvd., Roanoke Rapids, 27870 (800-522-4282 or www.visithalifax.com).

About 300 years ago, people from Virginia came into this area because the Roanoke River made it a promising place to farm, fish and grow industries. Siouan-speaking Saponi came down the river from western Virginia while white European colonists and black people, both free and enslaved, came from eastern Virginia. Today they all are still here farming, fishing and growing industries.

The Haliwa-Saponi mainly in the Hollister area number about 4,000, white people about 19,000, black people about 30,000. And the month of April is important to each community. The annual Haliwa-Saponi Pow-Wow, largest in the state, is the third weekend in April at the tribe's

school grounds (39021 Hwy. 561, Hollister, 27844, 252-586-4017, www.haliwa-saponi.com). April 12 is Halifax Day in Historic Halifax, where in April 1776 planters and shakers here hosted the North Carolina 4th Provincial Congress that produced the first legislation declaring American independence from Britain. And it was in April 1986 when Concerned Citizens of Tillery began commemorating the contributions African Americans have made to the region (Tillery History House, Monday–Friday, 321 Community Rd., Tillery, 27887, 252-826-3017, www.cct78.org).

The Heritage

Although locals around 1759 held "riots" for independence in nearby Enfield, Historic Halifax today is a State Historic Site that recalls the 1770s–1830s when Halifax as the 18th century county seat (it still is) was the liveliest place along the river. Handsome, restored buildings show off the architecture and furnishings of the times when proud people conducted business, visited, entertained, attended court and frequented taverns. Some 14 buildings and sites are open to the public, and guides in period costumes make them interesting and fun. It's free and open Tuesday–Saturday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. (252) 583-7191 or www.halifax.nchistoricsites.org.

Since 1976, the locally produced outdoor drama “First for Freedom” in late June and early July re-enacts the Halifax Resolves era at the impressive Halifax 4-H Rural Life Center, 13763 Highway 903, Halifax, 27839. Call 800-522-4282 or visit www.firstforfreedom.com

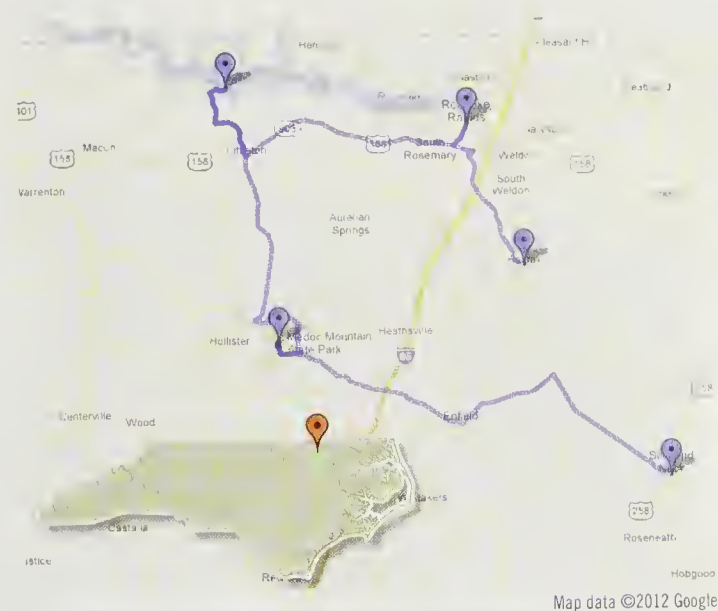
Roanoke Rapids always has been the industrial hub of the Roanoke Valley. It's here that the Roanoke River, from its source in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, tumbled on a geologic fall line of granite and dropped some 100 feet in just a few miles. The falls formed an obstacle to anyone transporting themselves and their goods. Like in other regions at the time, entrepreneurs and engineers figured out how to build a canal along the river to get around the falls. The 7.5-mile canal, built between 1819 and 1823, was the crowning achievement in opening the entire Roanoke River. The railroad era that began in the 1840s made river transportation less important, but the river itself powered mills and later electricity generators.

The Roanoke Canal Museum and Trail today explains all this and invites locals and visitors alike to meander a 7.8-mile trail from Roanoke Rapids Dam through Weldon. Along the way you see remnants of the canal structures, a corridor of quiet in this bustling city, parking places, interpretive signs, picnic areas and boating access on each end. The impressive museum, housed in a 1900 brick generator house, displays not only the Roanoke Rapids canal and industrial history, but also conveys the importance of rockfish on the river (they come up from the coast every spring to spawn), as well as significant events in the city's history. The museum is open Tuesday–Saturday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m., and costs \$4. The trail is open daily from dawn to dusk. (252) 537-2769 or www.roanokecanal.com

Nature and Recreation

Medoc Mountain State Park is 2,300 acres on the same granite fall line that made the Roanoke River rapids. It's more of a slope than a mountain. When the Weller family operated a big vineyard and winery here in the 1800s, they named it after a French wine-making region. After a logging period, local people proposed a state park in 1970, and Medoc Mountain opened soon after. You can hike in peace and see lots of birds, flowers and trees. Horses are welcome on 10 miles of trails. Little Fishing Creek is good for fishing and paddling, as well as for the Carolina mudpuppy salamander who exists only in this river basin. A large open space and its picnic shelter invites group outings. Ask the rangers about programs and the campground. The park is at 1541 Medoc State Park Rd, Hollister, 27844, (252) 586-6588 or www.ncparks.gov.


Opened in Scotland Neck in 2006, the 18-acre Sylvan Heights Bird Park has more waterfowl in one place than you'll see anywhere in the world. The programs are great for kids, too. Sylvan Heights also is known internationally for its work in preserving rare bird species. Visit here year-round Tuesday–Sunday. The admission price ranges from \$9 to \$5. It's at 220 Lees Meadow Rd., Scotland Neck, 27874, (252) 826-3186 or www.shwpark.com.



Soon after Virginia Electric in 1963 built a dam here creating a 20,000-acre reservoir, Lake Gaston became a popular recreation and vacation home site. Like its predecessor on Roanoke Rapids Lake downstream, the dam provides Dominion Power with electricity for this part of the state. Dominion maintains day-use areas at both lakes (Wednesday–Saturday), and N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission maintains boating access sites (919-707-0220 or www.ncwildlife.org). The area has guides and marinas to help you navigate (<http://lakegastonchamber.com>). Besides fishing and boating, Lake Gaston is home to wakeboarding (water skiing with a special surfboard) thanks to world champion wakeboarder Adam Fields. Visit www.AFWAKE.com or www.WakeSurfNC.com.

A major project of The Nature Conservancy in recent years has been to place some 94,500 acres of wildlands along the Roanoke River in managed conservation. Various agencies are involved now so that the entire river from Roanoke Rapids to the Albemarle Sound is ideal for paddling, fishing, camping, birding, cultural pursuits and general inspiration. Get information from www.nature.org/northcarolina or www.roanokeriverpartners.org. The wildly painted 6-foot rockfish statues seen throughout this area, co-sponsored by North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives, celebrate the importance of striped bass to the Roanoke Valley. These big fish come upriver in spring to spawn, and anglers from far and wide come with them. With a license, you can catch and release the fish in May and June, or keep them within limits in March and April. Find out more at (919) 707-0220 or www.ncwildlife.org.

Shopping, Eating and Staying

All the communities in the Roanoke Valley have local restaurants with eastern North Carolina specialties. (The chains are on Hwy. 158.) You can stay in major hotels off I-95 or local inns and motels. The main streets have good stores, but the well-known sites are Aunt Ruby's Peanuts in Enfield and Riverside Mill in Weldon. Riverside Mill is a nicely converted cotton mill housing a spacious display of art, crafts, gifts, clothing, antiques and furniture (252-536-3100 or www.riversidemill.net). 

Adventures

By Renee C. Gannon



Where the sun rises and sets:

Adventures on the Crystal Coast

The Southern Outer Banks, a different set of islands south of the OBX, creates the Crystal Coast. Stretching 85 miles along the Atlantic (in Carteret County and northern Onslow County), from the Cape Lookout National Seashore west to the New River, this region boasts inland towns and coastal beaches such as Morehead City, Beaufort, Cedar Island, Harkers Island and Shackleford Banks as well as Atlantic Beach, Indian Beach, Emerald Isle and Hammocks Beach State Park.

A special treat on this coast? The east-and-west orientation of the region allows you to see the sun rise AND set over the waters by just turning your gaze to the left and later to the right, whether on the Beaufort waterfront or the sandy beaches.

Beaufort

Some say the blue paint on porch ceilings of many of this

town's historic homes was chosen to ward off spirits. In a hamlet known for the legend of Blackbeard, that's a safe tale to believe.

Recently voted as the Coolest Small Town by Budget Travel magazine's online fans (tied for first with Hammondsport, N.Y.), this third-oldest town in North Carolina is small enough to visit in one day, but offers plenty for an extended visit.

Located at the southern tip of the Outer Banks, this seaport village has survived hurricanes and pirates since the late 1600s. Divers recently discovered Blackbeard's Queen Anne's Revenge in the shoals just three miles out from the waterfront. The North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort (www.ncmaritimemuseums.com/beaufort.html) offers an extensive exhibit on Blackbeard, the Queen Anne's Revenge and the shipwreck's discovery.

A walk along the waterfront offers views of Taylor's Creek, Carrot Island and the Rachel Carson Reserve. The island's small band of wild horses can often be seen foraging along the creek side. Many ferry services offer various tours to this island and Shackleford Banks to see wild horses, hunt for seashells, bird watch and learn the area's pirate history

(www.portcitytourcompany.com, www.islandferryadventures.com, www.crystalcoastecotours.com and www.outerbanksferry.com).

Historic building tours are a must. The two-acre Beaufort historic site (www.beauforthistoricsite.org) on Turner Street offers guided tours through six restored buildings that highlight 18th and 19th century life in Beaufort. A self-guided tour to some 30 sites within the six-block historic district is an easy stroll through history. If hoofing around town doesn't suit you, catch a ride on a Double Decker Bus Tour, featuring a 1967 English double-decker bus and listen to a local narrator while you take in the view.

One must-see is the Old Burying Ground, which dates back to 1704. The guided tour through this cemetery includes a Revolutionary War British naval officer who before dying wished to be buried standing up in full uniform, facing England; and the "Girl in the Barrel of Rum," a sad story of a young daughter who died on the voyage back to Beaufort, and whose father preserved the little body in a barrel of rum for the trip home and burial. Visitors, young and old, often leave items, such as toys, coins and ribbons, on the girl's grave.

What better way to learn more about the town's history than to go on a pirate and ghost tour after dark? The Port City Tour Company (www.portcitytourcompany.com) offers family-friendly ghost and pirate tours in Beaufort. The Beaufort Ghost Walk is led by a local "pirate" who regales the many tales about haunted houses, pirates and evil-doers in Beaufort, with the final stop at the Old Burying Ground—which many say is haunted.

Along the shores

Just beyond the Beaufort waterfront lies the Cape Lookout National Seashore (www.nps.gov/caloc), featuring 56 miles of protected Core Banks shoreline accessible only by boat. Local ferry services from Beaufort, Harkers Island and other ports provide roundtrip rides to Cape Lookout. These rides also feature a view of Shackleford Banks and the 115–120 "banker" horses that live on the banks' islands.

As you approach Cape Lookout on the South Core Banks, you can't miss the diamond-patterned, 163-foot lighthouse and the lighthouse keeper's station just beyond the shoreline. The refurbished 1859 lighthouse and its cast-iron stairwell opens to the public from mid-May to mid-September. Trivia about the diamond shapes: the black diamonds point north and south and the white diamonds point east and west.

Besides visiting the lighthouse and keeper's station, visitors can fish, swim, camp and explore the National Park Service site.

Cape Lookout Seashore also features the historic fishing town of Portsmouth Village on the North Core Banks. This 1753 village was one of the first settlements in the area and once home to more than 1,000 people, though abandoned since 1971. The National Park Service maintains a dozen or so buildings as part of the Portsmouth Village Historic District. Access to the North Core Banks is limited to ferry



service from Ocracoke Village or four-wheel-drive vehicles from the south.

Beach side

The Crystal Coast beaches are bookended by the Bogue Sound and the Atlantic Ocean, with Atlantic Beach, Indian Beach, Pine Knoll Shores, Salter Path and Emerald Isle offering families a variety of activities, from simple toes in the sand to casting a line into the Atlantic from the Emerald Isle Bogue Inlet Fishing Pier, boating and paddling in the ocean and the Bogue Sound, as well as sightseeing.

Beyond the shoreline of Atlantic Beach sits Fort Macon State Park, a 398-acre state park that features a five-sided, brick-and-stone Civil War fort and adjacent museum worth an hour or two of exploration. A self-guided tour of the fort, first garrisoned in 1834, offers a glimpse of military life before, during and after the Civil War. Park Service personnel are on-site to provide information and demonstrations.

Another attraction worth taking a beach break for is the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores—the newest of the state's three aquariums offers five galleries showcasing the state's varied eco-systems and 3,000 aquatic species from the mountains to the coast. The centerpiece is the 306,000-gallon "Living Shipwreck" tank, that features a life-sized replica of a German U-352 submarine and Blackbeard's Queen Anne's Revenge artifact replicas—all behind a 60-foot viewing window. The aquarium is situated within the 300-acre Roosevelt Maritime Forest.

Speaking of forests, if you are in the mood for a walk or bike ride in the shade, Emerald Isle's Woods Park offers 41 acres of canopied trails that takes you from the parking lot to the banks of the Bogue Sound. The park offers picnic sites, a floating dock, walking and hiking trails, and is part of the N.C. Bird Trail.

If just catching the warm solar rays and listening to the ocean suits all your needs, plenty of sand awaits your chair and towel. And remember, the sun rises and sets along the Crystal Coast.

More to see and do

This adventure doesn't cover all that the Crystal Coast offers. Visit www.crystalcoastnc.org or call (800) 786-6962 to find out more. 📍

North Carolina's 4-H Camps and Centers

Sertoma 4-H Center
(www.campsertoma.org)

Betsy-Jeff Penn 4-H Center
(www.bjpenn4h.org)

Swannanoa 4-H Center
(www.swan4h.com)



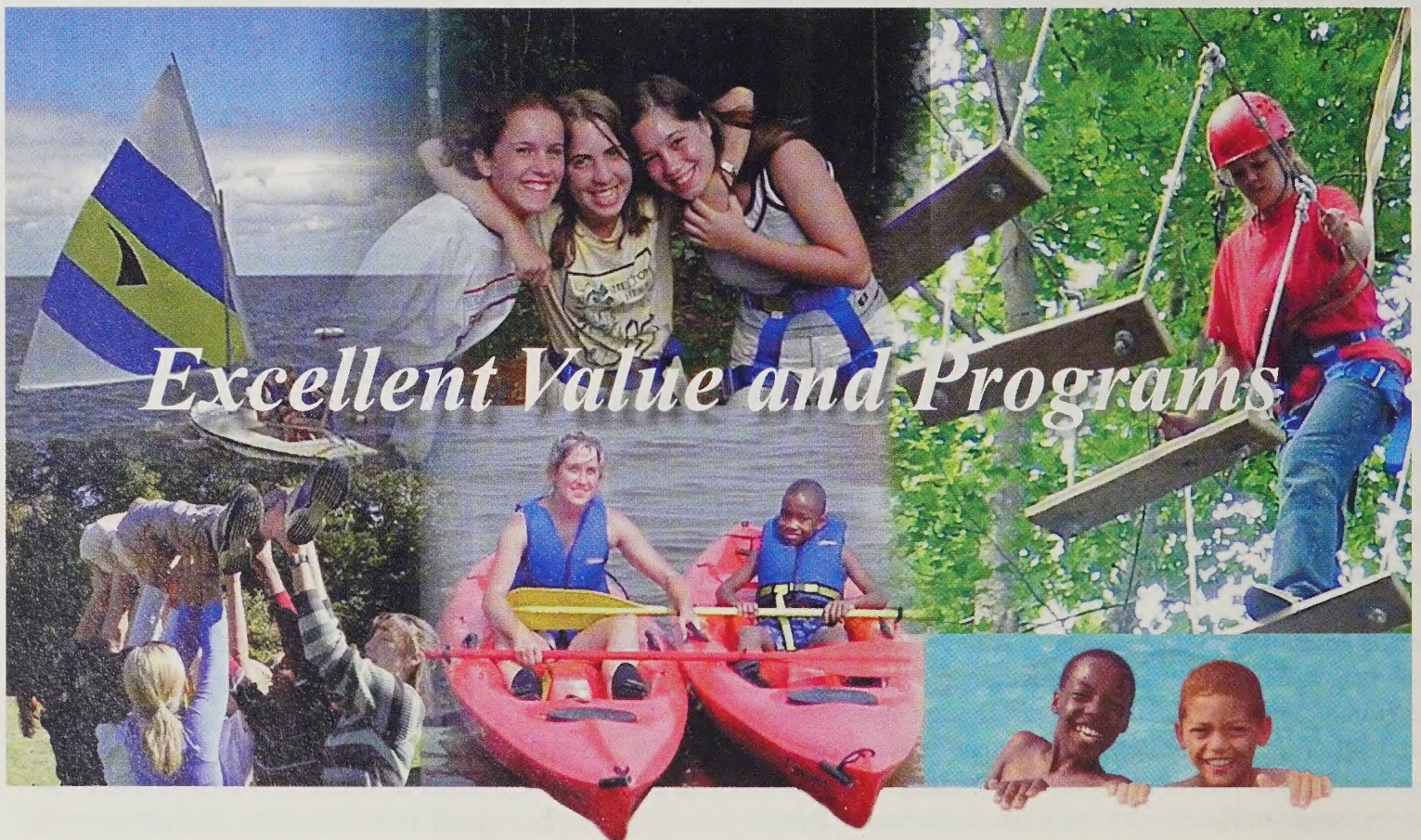
Eastern 4-H Center
(www.eastern4hcenter.org)

Millstone 4-H Camp
(www.millstone4hcamp.org)



www.nc4h.org/centers

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	(non-tobacco)	(tobacco)	(non-tobacco)	(tobacco)
35	\$1.30	\$1.79	\$1.08	\$1.49
55	\$3.20	\$4.30	\$2.53	\$3.55
65	\$5.36	\$7.18	\$4.14	\$5.41
75	\$10.23	\$13.24	\$7.64	\$8.85
85	\$19.77	\$26.26	\$16.52	\$17.67

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*Selected maximums apply depending on age.

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